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The Pantheon Principle

The spirit of the Roman Pantheon is the spirit which characterizes many of the Christian leaders of the West in their world outlook. The essence of this spirit is the assumption that creative activity is favored by an impartial respect for all the gods, that reverence for personality means "your idea is as good as mine", and that catholicity involves the inclusion of all possible points of view. It interprets the good life as meaning an eagerness to associate with the adherents of other religious faiths on the assumption that all people who call themselves religious have some fundamental interest in common.

One of the most interesting expressions of this idea is International House for students in New York City. This institution has been described as "a House of God for all creeds". By all means let us have international houses, but let us cease to confuse their function with the function of religion. Such houses are useful cultural centres where students can acquire cosmopolitan manners and in the activities of which religious people may helpfully cooperate. But to call such centres houses of God for all creeds is a distortion of language as well as a misconception of religion. There is no such thing as a God for all the creeds. Some of the creeds contain concepts of God which utterly contradict the concepts of other creeds and are absolutely irreconcilable with them. To assume that the creeds are all pointing to the

same God is to accept the spirit of the Roman Pantheon ; it results in emptying faith of all intellectual content and in reducing the idea of God to an undifferentiated vaporous sentiment.

An even more significant illustration of the pantheon principle as far as organized religion is concerned, is the proposed Universal Religious Peace Conference projected at a preliminary conference held in Geneva, September 1928. The discussions at this conference were evidently inspired by the conviction that all religions — at least all spiritual religions — are good, and that phrases like the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man can be accepted at their face value as having an identical meaning for all religious people. Such an uncritical attitude toward the intellectual premises of different faiths is often accompanied by a type of sentimentality favourable to romancing. A member of the conference representing the Islamic community, declared that his religion was one which transcended all barriers of caste, colour, and country, and that a Moslem was one who brought about and helped peace among mankind with all that lay in his power. The President of the American Federal Council of Churches seemed equally unaware of the humour of his remarks when he welcomed the conference in the name of the United States of America.

It is difficult to maintain one's respect for the intellectual integrity of a group in which such superficial and misleading statements could be made. They presuppose a community of thought and faith between the different religions which does not in fact exist. The assumption by any conference or group that it does exist breeds unreality and in the end insincerity. There is just as much difference between religious faiths as there is between political faiths. It is just possible that one might pick a group including Russian Communists and Czarists, British Tories and Socialists, American Republicans and Democrats, and Italian Fascists and Liberals, who would have certain interests in common. But if they were sincere men they could not cooperate on the basis of their political theories ; and who would be mad enough to suppose that if these men met in their capacity

as advocates of their respective social and political philosophies, they would be able to make any significant contribution to international peace. The same men might meet on a non-political platform as representatives of their respective nations and achieve much. In the same way religiously minded men might meet profitably on a non-religious platform to consider and find means for remedying certain obvious injustices in intergroup relations. For instance, it is the bounden duty of Christians in certain sections of Europe to demand and secure justice for the Jews. Conferences between Jews and Christians for this purpose are essential. But the people who will help most at these conferences are not the muddled headed persons who wish to cooperate on the assumption that after all Jews and Christians believe nearly the same thing. The people who can help are those who, because of their realism and intellectual honesty, recognize that it is not possible to cooperate with the Jews on the basis of identity of religious faith, but in spite of, and in fact because of, their intellectual disagreement with the Jews they insist on cooperation on a non-religious basis for the practical ends of securing justice. The issue at stake is the simple one of freedom of speech and conscience, and the Christian who has any of his Master's spirit left in him will wish to assure this freedom for those who disagree with him as well as for himself. He will wish as a Christian to take the initiative and to participate in any enterprise which gives promise of guaranteeing such freedom, but he will not confuse his will to practical cooperation with similarity of religious faith.

Not all religion is good. Some of it is very bad indeed. What our generation supremely needs is the cultivation of a sense of discrimination which will guide it in choosing the desirable elements in religion and in rejecting the undesirable. Instead of aiding at this point, world religious conferences tend to blur distinctions and to minimize the value of honest intellectual disagreement. Creative activity depends in religion, as in any other sphere of life, upon the existence of specific ideas about God and the universe which can serve as a basis for experimentation and correction. The impotence

of religion in the life of the modern world is due primarily to the poverty of its ideas. No creative religious activity of any significance can be expected until such words as God, man, deliverance and faith have a far richer content than they now possess for most religious leaders. Any effort carried on in the name of religion, whose total influence contributes to the further impoverishment of the distinctive concepts of different faiths, must be regarded as rendering a disservice to the cause of true religion.

The supreme need is not for the cultivation of a vapid religious cosmopolitanism, but for some one religion to demonstrate that it has a theory of life which will powerfully aid in the realization of a world society founded upon justice. This is our first task as Christians. It is a gigantic task. Christendom is broken into countless fragments. Most of the Protestant churches occupy a servile position in relation to the nation state. It is our task to create in the minds of individual men and women a sense of a new Christendom, and to help them achieve true catholicity in their individual attitudes as well as in their social relations. The catholic mind does not worship in a pantheon. The pantheon devotee can never acquire the catholic spirit, because he refuses to choose one point of reference from which to view the universe, and without a point of reference it is impossible to secure objectivity.

Catholicity requires a certain measure of detachment from particularistic interests and groups. It means the capacity to form an opinion about the ethical conduct of one's own class or nation or race in relation to other similar groups, with the same impartiality that one would strive for if one were not identified with any of the groups concerned. This capacity for ethical judgment upon one's own group as well as upon other groups is essential to the idea of justice. Without it the cry for justice becomes merely the assertion of self-interest. But a capacity for ethical judgment of this kind is entirely conditioned by one's ability to dissociate his mind, when necessary, from its emotional bias for any one group, and to view the issues between conflicting groups quite objectively. Such objectivity, however, can never be acquired unless some one point of reference has been chosen which

provides ethical criteria and a scale of values entirely independent of chance circumstances and shifting interest groups. So long as one's religion or philosophy of life is considered to be a sort of composite medley, dependent for its completion upon the inclusion of all possible points of view, the detachment necessary for true catholicity can never be realized.

It goes without saying that the sympathetic understanding of points of view opposed to one's own is essential to creative intellectual activity. Apart from other considerations such an understanding provides an indispensable corrective to the partial and warped elements in one's own point of view. But all points of view are in the last analysis rationalizations of particular situations. The effort to build one's world view upon a series of points of view is doomed to failure. It means that sooner or later one will become so completely enmeshed in some one particular situation as to be incapable of forming an objective catholic judgment. What is needed is not a collection of points of view but some one point of reference, which gives meaning to what one considers the most relevant facts in the universe, which is unconditioned by particular situations, and which provides the detachment necessary for forming ethical judgments regarding particular situations as they arise.

The catholic mind has chosen its point of reference ; it worships one God as it knows Him in Jesus Christ. That God is not of this world, but He loves man so much that He has achieved personalization in this world at the risk of his own life. Thus the man who has acquired true catholicity combines with detachment from this world a tremendous passion for achieving the good life in this world. In a sense he is an alien to every nation, but every land is his fatherland. The whole drama of human destiny is played out in his heart. Through him the community of saints becomes actualized in the life of the Church Universal. It is the catholic mind and the catholic community that the world needs. Let us as Christians give content to our faith rather than waste our slender resources in minimizing whatever distinctive content it may already have.

FRANCIS. P. MILLER

Résumé

Dans leur conception du monde, beaucoup de « leaders » chrétiens d'Occident s'inspirent de l'esprit du Panthéon romain, dont le caractère essentiel consiste à admettre qu'un respect impartial de tous les dieux favorise l'activité créatrice, et que l'œcuménisme doit inclure tous les points de vue possibles. Bien vivre serait donc s'associer avec empressement aux fidèles des autres religions, parce qu'on admet avoir en commun avec tous quelque intérêt fondamental.

Cette idée s'exprime d'une façon remarquable dans l'« International House for students » à New-York, surnommée « une maison de Dieu pour toutes les religions ». Certes il faut des foyers internationaux ; mais ne confondons pas leur fonction avec celle de la religion, ne dénaturons par le sens des mots, ne les appelons pas « maisons de Dieu pour toutes les religions ». Un tel Dieu n'existe pas. Les concepts de certaines religions sont irréconciliables avec ceux de certaines autres. Accepter le principe du Panthéon romain, c'est dépouiller la foi de tout contenu intellectuel. Une illustration plus significative encore, c'est le projet de Conférence religieuse universelle de la paix. A une conférence préliminaire (Genève, septembre 1928), les discussions s'inspiraient de la conviction que toutes les religions spiritualistes sont bonnes, que, dans toutes, Paternité de Dieu et Fraternité des hommes ont un sens identique. Un représentant musulman déclara que sa religion s'élevait au-dessus de toute barrière de caste, de couleur, de nationalité, qu'être Musulman c'était contribuer de tout son pouvoir à la paix du monde. Saluant l'assemblée au nom des Etats-Unis, le Président de l'« American Federal Council of Churches », sembla également inconscient du côté humoristique de ses observations.

Comment conserver son respect pour l'intégrité intellectuelle d'un groupement capable de déclarations si superficielles, si sujettes à induire en erreur ! Elles présupposent, entre religions différentes, une communauté de foi et de pensée inexistante en fait, et ne peuvent qu'aboutir à un manque de sincérité. Les différences sont aussi importantes en religion qu'en politique. Il serait tout juste possible de réunir un groupe comprenant des Russes communistes et tsaristes, des Anglais tories et socialistes, des Américains républicains et démocrates, des Italiens fascistes et libéraux, ayant certains intérêts en commun. Mais, entre eux, toute collaboration sincère fondée sur leurs théories politiques serait impossible. Cependant, sur un terrain non politique, ces hommes, comme représentant leurs pays respectifs,

pourraient accomplir de grandes choses. De même, les hommes d'esprit religieux se rencontrant sur un terrain non religieux. Ainsi des conférences entre Juifs et Chrétiens sont nécessaires pour assurer la justice aux Juifs dans certaines régions d'Europe. Mais les membres utiles de ces conférences ne seront pas ces esprit brouillons dont le désir de collaboration se fonde sur la supposition que Juifs et Chrétiens ont presque la même foi. Ce seront ceux qui, au contraire, reconnaissent que l'identité de foi religieuse ne peut ici servir de base, mais qui, en dépit et à cause même de leur désaccord intellectuel avec les Juifs, veulent chercher avec eux les moyens d'assurer la justice, sans confondre la collaboration pratique avec la similitude de foi religieuse.

Toute religion n'est pas bonne, loin de là. Le besoin suprême de notre génération est d'apprendre à discerner les éléments religieux qu'elle devra choisir de ceux qu'elle devra rejeter. Au lieu de développer ce sens des distinctions, les Conférences religieuses universelles tendent à l'affaiblir. En religion, l'activité créatrice dépend de l'existence d'idées spécifiques sur Dieu et l'univers. Aucune activité religieuse de quelque portée ne sera possible tant que les mots Dieu, l'homme, le salut, la foi ne seront pas infiniment plus riches de contenu qu'ils ne le sont actuellement pour la plupart des « leaders » religieux.

Il est suprêmement nécessaire, non que quelque vague religion cosmopolite se développe, mais qu'une religion démontre que sa conception de la vie aidera puissamment à établir une société fondée sur la justice. Dans une chrétienté infiniment fragmentée, où la plupart des églises protestantes sont dans une position servile en regard de l'Etat, nous devons éveiller chez les individus le sentiment d'une chrétienté nouvelle, les aider à atteindre au véritable œcuménisme, individuellement et socialement. Leur lieu de culte ne sera pas un Panthéon ; l'esprit œcuménique exige un point de repère sans lequel il est impossible de considérer l'univers d'une manière objective. L'œcuménisme réclame un certain détachement des intérêts et des groupes particuliers. Il implique la capacité de juger sa classe, sa nation, sa race avec une complète impartialité. Cette capacité dépend de la possibilité de se dépouiller, en cas de besoin, de toute partialité sentimentale, d'envisager objectivement le résultat des conflits de groupes. Mais on ne parviendra jamais au véritable œcuménisme si la religion et la philosophie de chacun sont comme une sorte de mélange qui ne peut se compléter que par l'addition de tous les points de vue possibles.

Point d'activité intellectuelle créatrice, évidemment, si on est incapable d'une compréhension sympathique de points de vue opposés aux siens. Mais, en dernière analyse, tout point de vue est une

rationalisation d'une situation particulière ; une conception du monde fondée sur un ensemble de points de vue est vouée à la faillite. Il importe donc, non d'en accumuler un grand nombre, mais de posséder un point de repère donnant le détachement d'esprit nécessaire pour former des jugements moraux sur les situations particulières à mesure qu'elles surgissent.

L'esprit œcuménique a choisi ce point : il adore un seul Dieu, qu'il a appris à connaître en Jésus-Christ. Ce Dieu n'est pas de ce monde, mais aime les hommes au point de s'être fait homme au risque de sa vie. De même, l'homme qui possède l'esprit œcuménique unit le détachement de ce monde au désir passionné d'y bien vivre. Par lui, la communion des saints se réalise dans la vie de l'Eglise universelle. Voilà l'œcuménisme dont le monde a besoin. Pensons notre foi, plutôt que de rabaisser ce qu'elle peut déjà avoir de contenu distinctif.

The Inclusive and Exclusive Aspects of Christian Truth

The great process of re-discovering the Christian message and of finding an adequate formulation for it, in which ever increasing groups of Christian thinkers participate, compels us to face the question of the relation of Christian truth to other systems of religious or secular thought in a new way. The question itself is not new. As pointed out in the penetrating article by Professor de Zwaan in this number, there have been other periods in European history in which it belonged to the most acute of religious issues. This is especially true of the so-called Enlightenment. But the answers given to it show abundantly how relatively easily the matter could be settled at that time. Christianity was as yet supreme and practically unchallenged. Whatever might happen beneath the surface the Christian Church could feel secure because no great forces had appeared which could endanger its spiritual leadership over the Western world. The great discussion with other religions and other conceptions of life had not yet begun. To speak about Christianity's relationship to other systems was therefore largely a matter of theoretical interest. One could afford to be generous to others and to sacrifice central elements of one's own position because nothing would happen anyway. At least so it seemed.

For us, Christians of 1929, the same question is not only acute or interesting but it is intensely practical. We live in a world where Christianity is no longer an easy winner. We are surrounded by other religions which have by no means abdicated in favour of Christianity. We are being appealed to by many conceptions of life which frankly profess to be alternatives to the Christian faith. Whether we live in the East or in the West the problem of the relation of our faith to the faith which others proclaim as truth has

come to our doors. No one can stop the process of give and take which has been set in motion between the world religions. At the same time non-religious views of life are becoming increasingly articulate and pretend to have more satisfactory answers to the problem of human life.

What shall our attitude be? Is it one of stubborn isolation, which excludes *a priori* all that comes to us from non-Christian sources? Or shall it be one of welcoming all thoughts which in some way or another appeal to us in order to include them in our Christianity? Or is there a third possibility?

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To many it may seem that the question has been settled already. If we look at the educated classes in most countries to-day, we notice a curious consensus of opinion on this point. In so far as they have not arrived at the point where all religious concepts are considered to be pure illusions or deliberate falsehoods, they are generally willing to admit that all religions and all conceptions of life have some element of truth in them, that all of them may ultimately lead to the same goal and that they should therefore cease opposing each other and rather try to combine their best elements in one imposing symphony of truth.

There is accordingly a great interest in all movements which proclaim the essential one-ness of all religions and philosophies. Theosophy, Anthroposophy, Sufism and Baháism and a host of other less organised groupings recruit their supporters from the ranks of those who have come to believe that the ways to truth are many and that no particular doctrine or system can be said to have a monopoly of it.

It is not only, however, in these somewhat exotic cults that the idea of the inclusive character of religion has found enthusiastic support. There are nowadays a good many leading thinkers who make it the key-stone of their philosophy of life. Refined philosophers like Keyserling, influential authors like Romain Rolland, prophets from the East

like Tagore stand for a conception of life which is hospitable to the greatest possible variety of truth and which does not exclude or reject any inherently religious value.

No less do we find the same attitude inside the Christian Churches. At the preliminary conference for the Universal Religious Peace Conference Professor Hauer made the following statement, which is only too true of wide sections of our present day Christianity : "In relegating ritualist and dogmatic details to the background — without indeed abandoning them — the various religions have become, if I may say so, relativist. By a natural evolution they are reaching the conclusion — which they do not always openly formulate — that man can find salvation in various faiths and through different rites, provided he directs his soul toward the principle of divinity, loves his fellowman, and translates his love into deeds of justice and charity. So far as the various religions succeed in discovering that their essential principles are similar, if not the same, they tend to put aside their differences and emphasise their unity".

It is also obvious that a good many of the difficulties with which the student volunteer movements for missions are being faced to-day, as they try to bring the missionary cause before students, arise from the same general conviction. Why should we pretend to go out as missionaries, if we do not believe that there is an essential and fundamental distinction between truth as revealed in the Christian faith and the truth of other religious systems ?

There is then good reason for the belief that the question has been settled — at least in principle — and that modern thought is rapidly driving us to the inclusive rather than the exclusive attitude. Our new knowledge of the great world religions, our respect for human personality and for the personality of nations, our common sense, which prefers partnership in a common practical cause to disputes about points of doctrine or ritual, and our whole modern idea of truth as relative rather than absolute — all these compel us to settle the question in favour of unrestricted tolerance, and mutual interpenetration between the various religions and philosophies of life. Frederick the Great's famous

words : "Let everyone find his salvation in his own way" have found a tremendous echo in our days.

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There are, however, some difficulties which have to be overcome before we, as Christians, can accept that solution. There are some words of Christ which seem to point in quite a different direction : "I am the Truth....", "He that entereth not by the door....". And there is Saint Paul : "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ". And there is, for those who are not "too modern" to hear its message, the testimony of the Church of Christ through the ages, including the martyrs and the prophets, the teachers and the missionaries down to the present day, down to the World's Student Christian Federation.

These views make us wonder whether all is well with the assumption that the Christian attitude to other systems and philosophies is simply one of unrestricted hospitality. The question arises whether there is not an inherent misunderstanding which underlies the whole argument for the inclusive attitude.

To discover the misunderstanding, if it exists, we must look more closely at the presuppositions on which this conception is based.

The inclusive attitude presupposes a conception of Christianity and of religion generally which looks upon the contents of faith as secondary. For it the distinctive thing about religion is either an ethical or an emotional attitude. Religion is either that function of human life which acts as the great moral dynamic to "make the world a better place to live in", or that peculiar sphere of life where man finds his deepest emotional satisfaction. On both bases a thoroughly tolerant non-aggressive and purely cooperative attitude to other views of life may be worked out. For if I believe that the ultimate goal of religion is to work for a better world, why should I not join efforts with those of other religions who are interested in the same goal and why should

I not welcome their teachings on the same subject as long as they seem to point in the same direction ? And again, if I believe that religion's task is to give man emotional satisfaction, why should I not accept the greatest variety of contributions of all religions to the great cause of giving inward peace to mankind ?

To put the same thing differently it is thought that religion exists to serve man and that man is lord over his own religion. Man chooses his religion as he chooses his political conceptions. Man is autonomous and creative—in the realm of religion as elsewhere — and may therefore combine and include in his religious life whatever seems acceptable to him.

Is this also the presupposition of Christianity ?

It is not, for Christianity is the religion of faith in Christ. For it the content of its faith is never secondary. Without this particular content there is no Christian faith. Jesus Christ is not only the originator or founder of Christianity so that He has become superfluous after bringing it to the world. He belongs in the picture. Christianity is at least as much religion about Christ as it is religion of Christ. It is not primarily concerned with an ethical dynamic or the satisfaction of emotions. It provides both things but knows of an even greater mission which is to proclaim that God has revealed Himself to man in Jesus Christ.

Religion — Christian religion — does not therefore exist to serve man, but first and foremost to serve God. The curious thing, however, is that man is best served where God is being served. For only where there is obedience to God the inherent egotism of man is being overcome. But if this is so Christian religion is not an affair of our creation or will, but rather a matter of obedience, of listening, of accepting the gift bestowed upon us.

The real question as to the exclusive and inclusive aspects of our faith is therefore not, what can I make use of ? or, what may be satisfactory to me or to humanity ? It is, what may I include without becoming disobedient to Him Who has called me ? What must I exclude in order to be faithful to His truth as revealed to me in Jesus Christ ?



Our attitude to other religious systems and to all the conceptions of life, if it is to be Christian, cannot therefore follow the line of least resistance which is traced by so much of modern thought. We must part company with those who look upon their faith as a thing of their own making and who are accordingly willing to accept or reject, to include and to exclude other religious values according to their own free choice and liking. We must dare to confess that the greatest thing about our faith is that which has been given to us and we must be ready to be obedient to Him Who gave it. His truth is put in our hands. We may not be worthy of it, we may only perceive it at times, we may deny it by our lives or spoil it by the admixture of our impurity and weakness — but it remains at the bottom His truth.

From that basis we may be able to find the right attitude to other messages and interpretations of life.

Because it is His truth for which we try to stand, our attitude should never be one of fear or even one of defence. There is no reason to fear for the future of God's truth. It does not need defence. If we have come to believe that we may share in truth revealed by God Himself we cannot be anything else but courageous messengers of that which we have seen and heard.

Moreover because it is His truth, we must guard it most carefully from "entangling alliances" with that which is just plain human relativity. In our attitudes to other religions or philosophies we are to distinguish most sharply between our political desires, our cultural ambitions, our denominational or confessional hobbies, and the message which has been entrusted to us. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels". We will never be mathematically sure what belongs to the treasure and what to the vessel. But if we see the tremendous danger of confusion between the two we may become sensitive enough to avoid at least the gravest sins against the Holy Spirit. We may then be led to look critically upon our own thoughts and actions and draw a

line between our Western imperialism, our cultural pride, our race-superiority-complex, our competitive spirit and so many other all-too-human inclinations on the one side, and the message entrusted to us on the other.

Because it is His truth we must be willing to go the whole way and even put our own religious life (in so far as it is nothing but our own religious life) on the human side of the line. We are therefore not to form our judgment as to what values should be included on the basis of our own form of religious life, our own historical particularity, our own rational religious custom, our own denomination. We are to keep the message as free from encumbrances as we can possibly make it. We ought to watch the inclusion of not immediately God-given values at least as much in relation to our own environment, our nation, our class, our denomination, as in relation to other religions. There is just as much danger for an uncritical mixture of God's truth with very ungodly elements as we face our own nation and culture, as in the relations between different religious systems.

Stanley Jones in his widely read books has made it very vivid for us. We are to bring the Gospel of Christ and not the gospel of our own particular coterie. One might only add : We are to bring the Gospel of the full Christ and not to forget the presuppositions on which His message is based. If we do that, the matter is settled in principle. If we do not "preach ourselves" but Christ, and the whole Christ, there is no real issue between the inclusive and the exclusive attitude. The gospel itself will take care of what should be included and what should be excluded. We are no longer dependent upon ourselves alone to make the choice. The light shines in the darkness and will clearly show up what is darkness and what is light. Christianity is exclusive in so far as Christ excludes, it is inclusive in so far as Christ includes.

Our only hope of finding a way through the complexity of modern life is therefore to deepen our loyalty to Him, and to listen more attentively to the message which God gave us through Him.

W. A. VISSER 'T HOOFT

Uebersetzung

Das grosse Geschehen der Wiederentdeckung der christlichen Botschaft, und der Wunsch, eine Neu-Formulierung für diese zu finden, hat in immer steigendem Masse Gruppen christlicher Denker erfasst und zwingt uns, die Frage der Beziehungen der christlichen Wahrheit zu anderen Religions- oder neuen Gedankensystemen weltlicher Art näher zu prüfen. Die Frage selber ist nicht neu. Wie Herr Professor de Zwaan in seinem packenden Artikel in dieser selben Nummer sagt, hat diese Frage in anderen Abschnitten der europäischen Geschichte zu den aller akutesten religiösen Streitfragen gehört.

Dies trifft besonders zu für die „Aufklärung“. Aber die Antworten, die gefunden wurden, zeigen deutlich, wie zu diesen Zeiten die Fragen verhältnismässig einfach gelöst werden konnten. Das Christentum war damals noch die grösste Wahrheit und unanfechtbar. Was auch immer geschehen mochte, die christliche Kirche fühlte sich im Innern sicher, da es keine anderen grossen Kräfte gab, die ihre geistige Führerschaft über die westliche Welt gefährden konnten. Die grosse Aussprache mit anderen Religionen und anderen Weltanschauungen hatte noch nicht begonnen. Wenn man deshalb über die Beziehungen des Christentums zu anderen Systemen sprach, handelte es sich mehr um ein rein theoretisches Interesse. Man konnte es sich ruhig erlauben, den anderen gegenüber grosszügig zu sein und gewisse Hauptelemente der eigenen Stellung zu opfern, da im Grunde nichts geschehen würde. Wenigstens schien das so.

Für uns Christen von heute ist die gleiche Frage nicht nur brennend oder interessant sondern von absolut praktischer Art. Wir leben in einer Welt, in der das Christentum durchaus nicht mehr einen leichten Sieg davonträgt. Wir sind umgeben von anderen Religionen, die in keiner Weise zu Gunsten des Christentums verachtet haben. Wir werden herausgefordert von vielen Weltanschauungen, die offen erklären, dass sie dem christlichen Glauben die Alternative stellen. Ob wir im Osten oder Westen leben, das Problem der Beziehungen unseres Glaubens zu dem Glauben, den andere für den wahren halten, liegt ständig auf der Hand. Keiner kann diesen Prozess des Hinüber und Herüber hemmen, der zwischen den Weltreligionen wachgerufen worden ist. Gleichzeitig werden nicht-religiöse Lebensansichten immer klarer ausgesprochen und ihre Vertreter behaupten sogar, dass sie eine befriedigendere Antwort auf die Probleme des menschlichen Lebens geben können.

Welche Stellung haben wir dazu einzunehmen? Die der halsstarrigen Isolierung, die sich von vornherein gegen alles, was nicht

christlichen Ursprung hat, verschliesst ? Oder sollen wir freudig alle Gedanken begrünnen, die uns in einer oder der anderen Weise gefallen, um sie in unser Christentum einzubeschliessen ? Oder gibt es eine dritte Möglichkeit ?

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Viele von Ihnen werden glauben, dass die Frage schon gelöst worden ist. Sehen wir uns heute einmal die gebildeten Klassen der meisten Länder an, so werden wir eine eigenartige Meinungsübereinstimmung in diesem Punkt finden. Soweit sie noch nicht das Moment erreicht haben, wo alle religiösen Begriffe als reine Illusionen oder absichtliche Unwahrheiten angesehen werden, sind sie bereit zuzustimmen, dass alle Religionen und alle Weltanschauungen ein Element der Wahrheit in sich haben, dass alle schliesslich zum gleichen Ziel führen, und dass sie deshalb sich nicht mehr gegenseitig bekämpfen sondern versuchen sollten, ihre besten Elemente in einer gewaltigen Symphonie der Wahrheit erklingen zu lassen.

Infolgedessen finden alle Bewegungen, die die wesentliche Einheit aller Religionen und Philosophien proklamieren, grosses Interesse. Theosophie, Anthroposophie, Sufismus und Bahaismus und andere weniger organisierte Gruppen finden ihre Anhänger in den Reihen derer, die glauben, dass es mehrere Wege der Wahrheit gibt und dass keine besondere Lehre oder kein System ein Monopol für sich beanspruchen kann.

Aber nicht nur in diesen etwas fremdartigen Kulturen hat der Gedanke des einbeschliessenden Wesens der Religion begeisterten Anklang gefunden. Viele der heutigen führenden Denker machen diesen Gedanken zum Kernpunkt ihrer Lebensphilosophie. Verfeinerte Philosophen wie Keyserling, einflussreiche Schriftsteller wie Romain Rolland, Propheten des Ostens wie Tagore setzen sich ein für eine Lebensauffassung, die die grösstmögliche Verschiedenheit der Wahrheit möglich macht und die nicht irgendwelche inneren, religiösen Werte verwirft oder ausschliesst.

In nicht geringerem Masse finden wir die gleiche Haltung innerhalb der christlichen Kirchen. Bei der der allgemeinen religiösen Friedenskonferenz vorausgehenden Vor-Konferenz gab Herr Professor Hauer folgenden Bericht, der nur zu wahr ist für weite Teile unseres heutigen Christentums : „ Indem man rituelle und dogmatische Einzelheiten in den Hintergrund geschoben hat, — ohne sie ganz auszumerzen — sind die verschiedenen Religionen, wenn ich so sagen darf, relativistisch geworden. In einer ganz natürlichen Entwicklung kommen sie zu der Schlussformulierung, — wenngleich sie diese auch nicht immer offen aussprechen — dass der Mensch seine Erlösung in verschiedenen

Wahrheiten und in verschiedenen Formen des Ritus finden kann, vorausgesetzt, dass seine Seele das Prinzip der Göttlichkeit anerkennt, dass er seine Mitmenschen liebt und diese Liebe in Taten der Gerechtigkeit und Wohltat zum Ausdruck bringt. Soweit es den verschiedenen Religionen gelingt, die Gleichheit ihrer wesentlichen Glaubenssätze zu entdecken, neigen sie dazu die Verschiedenheiten zu vergessen und das Hauptgewicht auf die Einheit zu legen. “

Unzweifelhaft wurzeln viele der Schwierigkeiten, denen sich die Missionsfreiwilligen-Bewegung der Studenten gegenüber gestellt sieht, in der gleichen allgemeinen Ueberzeugung. Warum sollen wir denn als Missionare hinausgehen, wenn wir nicht glauben, dass es eine wesentliche und fundamentale Unterscheidung gibt zwischen der Wahrheit, wie sie sich im christlichen Glauben offenbart, und der Wahrheit anderer Religionen ?

So haben wir viele Gründe anzunehmen, dass die Frage gelöst sei — wenigstens im Prinzip — und dass die moderne Geisteswelt der einbeschliessenden Haltung immer mehr zustrebt und die ausschliessende an Bedeutung verliert. Unser neues Wissen um die grossen Weltreligionen, unsere Achtung vor der menschlichen Persönlichkeit sowie die der Nationen, unser gesunder Menschenverstand, der eine Arbeitsgemeinschaft in einer gemeinsamen praktischen Sache einer Auseinandersetzung über Glaubenssätze oder Fragen des Ritus vorzieht, sowie die moderne Idee einer relativen und nicht absoluten Wahrheit zwingen uns, die Frage zugunsten der unbeschränkten Duldung und gegenseitigen Durchdringung der verschiedenen Religionen und Lebensphilosophien zu lösen. Friedrich des Grossen Worte : „ Ein jeder soll nach seiner Façon selig werden “, haben in unseren Tagen ein starkes Echo gefunden.

* * *

Es gibt aber doch gewisse Schwierigkeiten, die wir als Christen zu überwinden haben, ehe wir eine solche Lösung annehmen können. Einige Worte Christi scheinen etwas ganz anderes zum Ausdruck zu bringen „ Ich bin die Wahrheit... “, „ Wer nicht durch diese Pforte geht... “, und ferner der Apostel Paulus : „ Einen andern Grund kann niemand legen ausser dem, der gelegt ist, welcher ist Jesus Christ. “

Und für die, die noch nicht „ zu modern “ sind, um es zu hören, gilt das Zeugnis der Kirche Christi durch die Jahrhunderte hindurch, das Zeugnis der Märtyrer und Propheten, der Lehrer und Missionare bis in unsere Tage und hin zum Christlichen Studenten-Weltbund.

Diese Ansichten rufen in uns Zweifel wach, ob es wirklich richtig ist, anzunehmen, dass der Christ anderen Systemen und Philosophien

die Haltung einer uneingeschränkten Aufnahmebereitschaft entgegenzubringen hat. Die Frage taucht auf, ob nicht dem ganzen Argument der inklusiven Haltung ein inneres Misverständnis zugrundeliegt.

Um dieses Misverständnis, falls es vorhanden ist, zu entdecken, müssen wir die Voraussetzungen näher prüfen, auf der diese Auffassung basiert.

Die inklusive Haltung setzt eine Konzeption des Christentums und der Religion im allgemeinen voraus, die dem Glauben eine sekundäre Rolle einräumt. Sie sieht in der ethischen oder gefühlsmässigen Haltung das zentrale Element. Religion ist entweder die Funktion im menschlichen Leben, die als die grosse dynamische Kraft wirkt „ und die Welt in der wir leben, immer besser macht “, oder sie ist die besondere Sphäre, in der der Mensch seine tiefste seelische Befriedigung findet. In beiden Fällen kann sich eine durchaus tolerante, nicht angreifende und rein kooperative Einstellung zu anderen Lebensanschauungen ausdrücken. Denn, wenn ich annehme, dass das letzte Ziel der Religion die Schaffung einer besseren Welt ist, warum soll ich dann nicht meine Kräfte mit denen anderer Religionen vereinigen, die das gleiche Ziel verfolgen, und warum soll ich nicht ihre Lehren über den selben Gegenstand begrüssen, solange sie in gleicher Richtung mit der meinen laufen ? Und wieder, wenn ich glaube, dass die Aufgabe der Religion in der Befriedigung der seelischen Nöte des Menschen liegt, warum sollte ich da nicht die grosse Variation der Gaben aller Religionen annehmen, sofern sie der Menschheit inneren Frieden geben ?

Um dies in einem anderen Gedanken auszudrücken : die Religion ist dazu da, um dem Menschen zu dienen und ihn zum Herrn über seine eigene Religion zu setzen. Der Mensch kann seine Religion wählen, wie er seine politische Einstellung wählt. Der Mensch ist in dem Reich der Religion, wie überall anders autonom und schöpferisch und kann deshalb in sein religiöses Leben alles das einbeschliessen, was ihm annehmbar scheint.

Ist dies auch die Voraussetzung des Christentums ?

Nein, Christentum heisst Glaube an Christus. Und der Glaubensinhalt ist niemals sekundärer Art. Ohne diesen besonderen Inhalt gibt es keinen christlichen Glauben. Christus ist nicht nur der Urheber oder Gründer des Christentums, sodass Er überflüssig wird, nachdem Er es der Welt gebracht hat, sondern Er ist der Kern. Das Christentum ist ebenso sehr die Religion über Christus als von Ihm. Es handelt sich hier nicht in erster Linie um ethische Dynamik oder seelische Befriedigung. Das Beides ergibt sich von selbst, sondern es handelt sich um eine grosse Botschaft, nämlich, dass Gott sich selbst den Menschen offenbart hat in Jesus Christus.

Religion — christliche Religion ist also nicht dazu da, um den Menschen zu dienen, sondern um vor allem und allein Gott zu dienen. Und wir erleben dann das Wunderbare, dass dem Menschen immer da am besten gedient ist, wo Gott gedient ist. Denn nur im Gehorsam zu Gott kann der innere Egoismus des Menschen überwunden werden. Wenn dies aber so ist, dann kann die christliche Religion nicht ein Ding unserer Schöpfung oder unseres Willens sein, sondern ist eine Sache des Gehorsams, des Lauschens und der Annahme der Gaben Gottes.

Die tatsächliche Frage in Bezug auf die exklusive oder inklusive Seite unseres Glaubens lautet also nicht : was kann ich daraus machen oder : was wird mich oder die Menschheit zufriedenstellen ? sondern : was kann ich einschliessen, ohne Gott ungehorsam zu werden, der mich gerufen hat ? Was muss ich ausschliessen, um Seiner Wahrheit, wie sie sich in Jesus Christus offenbart, treu zu bleiben ?

* * *

Unsere Haltung zu anderen Religionen und allen anderen Lebensanschauungen kann daher nicht, wenn sie christlich ist, den leichtesten Weg wählen, wie dies so sehr in modernen Gedankenrichtungen der Fall ist. Wir müssen uns trennen von denen, die ihren Glauben als ihr eigenes Machwerk ansehen und die bereit sind, entsprechend ihrer freien Wahl andere religiöse Werte ein oder auszuschliessen, anzunehmen oder zu verwerfen. Wir müssen den Mut haben auszusprechen, dass das Grösste in unserem Glauben das ist, was uns gegeben wird, und wir müssen Ihm gehorsam sein, der uns dies gab. Seine Wahrheit ist in unsere Hände gelegt. Wir sind dessen oft nicht wert, wir mögen sie nur manchmal erkennen, wir mögen sie durch unser Leben verneinen oder durch unsere Unreinheit und Schwachheit trüben — aber es bleibt doch Seine Wahrheit.

Von diesem Grund aus können wir die richtige Haltung anderen Botschaften und Lebensinterpretationen gegenüber finden.

Da es Seine Wahrheit ist, für die wir uns einsetzen, dürften wir niemals Furcht haben oder eine verteidigende Haltung einnehmen. Wenn wir aber zu dem Glauben gekommen sind, dass wir teilhaben an der Wahrheit, die durch Gott selber offenbar wurde, dann können wir nichts anderes als Botschafter dessen werden, was wir sahen und hörten.

Mehr noch, da es Seine Wahrheit ist, müssen wir sie rein halten von „verwirrenden Verbindungen“ und einer rein menschlichen Relativität. In unserer Haltung zu anderen Religionen oder Philosophien müssen wir scharf unterscheiden zwischen unseren politischen Wünschen, unserem kulturellen Ehrgeiz, unseren denominationellen oder konfessionellen Steckpferden und der Botschaft, die uns anvertraut worden ist. „Wir haben diesen Schatz in irdi-

schen Gefässen “. Wir werden mathematisch nie feststellen können, was zum Gefäss und was zum Schatz gehört. Aber wenn wir die ungeheure Gefahr der Verwirrung sehen, können wir vorsichtig werden, damit wir wenigstens die grössten Sünden wider den Heiligen Geist vermeiden. Wir mögen dann anfangen unsere eigenen Gedanken und Taten kritisch anzusehen und einen Strich zu ziehen zwischen unserem westlichen Imperialismus, unserem Kulturstolz, unserem rassenmässigen Superioritätskomplex, unserem ehrgeizigen Geist und so vielen anderen sogenannten menschlichen Neigungen und der Botschaft, die uns anvertraut worden ist.

Da es Seine Wahrheit ist, müssen wir bereit sein, den Weg bis ans Ende zu gehen und sogar unser eigenes religiöses Leben (soweit es sich dabei um nichts anderes als unser religiöses Leben handelt) auf die menschliche Seite der Linie zu stellen. Wir können deshalb nicht beurteilen, welche Werte einbeschlossen werden sollten auf Grund unseres religiösen Lebens, unserer eigenen geschichtlichen Besonderheit, unserer eigenen rationalen religiösen Sitte, unserer eigenen Denomination. Wir müssen die Botschaft so rein als nur möglich halten. Wir sollten mit der Einbeschliessung nicht absolut gottgegebener Werte, wenigstens in Bezug auf unsere Umgebung, Nation, Klasse oder Denomination als auch auf andere Religionen vorsichtig sein. Auch hier bietet sich in Bezug auf unsere Nation und Kultur als auch auf die Beziehungen zwischen den verschiedenen Religionssystemen die Gefahr einer unkritischen Mischung der Wahrheit Gottes mit ungöttlichen Elementen.

Stanley Jones hat dies in seinem bekannten Buch sehr lebendig klargelegt. Wir haben die Botschaft Christi zu bringen und nicht die Botschaft unserer eigenen Sippschaft. Man könnte hinzufügen: wir haben die ganze Botschaft Christi zu bringen und dürfen nicht die Voraussetzungen vergessen, auf denen Seine Botschaft aufgebaut ist. Wenn wir das tun, ist die Frage im Prinzip gelöst. Wenn wir nicht „uns selbst“ predigen, „sondern Christus, den ganzen Christus“, dann gibt es keine Streitfrage zwischen der inklusiven und exklusiven Haltung. Das Evangelium selber wird uns lehren, was einbegriffen und was ausgeschlossen werden soll. Wir sind nicht auf unsere eigene Wahl angewiesen. Das Licht scheint in der Finsternis und wird klar zeigen, was Licht und was Finsternis ist. Christentum kann in soweit exklusiv sein, als Christus ausschliesst, aber es wird auch in soweit inklusiv sein als Christus mit einbeschliesst.

Wir sehen unsere einzige Hoffnung, unseren Weg durch die Vielgestaltigkeit des modernen Lebens hindurchzufinden, in der Vertiefung unserer Treue Ihm gegenüber und darin, dass wir Seiner Botschaft, die Gott uns durch Christus gibt, aufmerksamer lauschen.

The Problem of the Modern Conception of the World in its Relation to World Christendom

NICOLAS BERTIAEFF

Our epoch is dominated by the idea of the drawing together of the divided portions of the Christian world. International Christian organisations and Conferences are, as it were, the outward manifestations of this movement. The problem of the universality of Christianity with its attendant obligations presents itself with special urgency to all Christian confessions. The approach to each other of the East and the West recalls the conditions of the Hellenistic age. All Christians are emerging from their isolation and self-sufficiency. The same thing is taking place in a special form in Catholicism, in spite of its imperialist character. This movement within the Christian world is stimulated by the concentration and activity of anti-Christian forces ; the Church is forced to a recognition of its universal character. The Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church alike recognise this ; for Protestantism the question wears a different aspect, since in its eyes the invisible Church alone has this united and universal character, whilst the visible Church, is divided into a number of Christian communions. This fact makes it easier for Protestants to take part in movements for Church union. But it must be frankly acknowledged that the universality of the Church of Christ has not been sufficiently realised and manifested ; it still remains up to a certain point potential and concealed. There exists a Church which is one and universal, but all the severed members of the Christian body suffer from a lack of completeness, a certain want. And this severance is the result of sin. It is not given to us to know when the Holy Spirit will re-unite the severed members of the Christian world. But from the

human point of view we see that the universality of Christendom must be realised and must manifest itself under the influence of the problems raised by the historical process. Our epoch, which is so divided and so anarchical, is torn by mortal suffering ; it longs for unity, for a unified conception of the world and of life. Our Christianity can no longer be confined to a mere part of our being, it cannot be limited to a piety of Sundays and Feast Days ; it must be realised in the fullness of life. The Christian conscience can no longer admit a dualism between Christianity and life, Christianity and culture, Christianity and the conception of the world which has been created by centuries of secular thought. Finally, we must recognise that the conception of the world held by Christians to-day, their way of regarding the world and human life, rest to a large extent on non-Christian principles. The nature of the modern spirit and the conception of the world which has prevailed in Europe during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is determined by humanism and modern science. The Christian of to-day enters life after a period of secularisation of culture, society, and all forms of thought. Christianity has either lost touch with life and lost all power over it, or it has fallen beneath the sway of the powers of this world, and subordinated the eternal to the temporal ; here we have the cause of that dualism by which the modern Christian spirit is torn. Between Christianity and the contemporary conception of the world a compromise has been made, but no organic or inward transformation has yet been effected.

Medieval society and medieval culture were in principle unified, organic, and subordinated to the Christian idea. But the barbaric instincts and the remains of Paganism were still too strong amongst the Christian peoples of the Middle Ages.

The Kingdom of Heaven cannot be established from without and by force ; the Kingdom of Heaven comes by hidden ways. Medieval theocracy was satisfied with exterior signs and symbols of the Kingdom of God, but failed to establish it in fact. The true establishment of the Kingdom presupposes liberty and free consent.

The theocracy of the Middle Ages was destined to crumble because it failed to take into account the principle of human freedom, and prevented the free manifestation of human powers. Now we find ourselves at a moment in history when the creative forces of man have been liberated. Man has begun to use his freedom in all domains of life, in art, in science, in economic and political life, in morals, in technical science. All spheres of life have become autonomous. Along these lines man has created much that is valuable, has gained vast wealth, has conquered new worlds, has enlarged his horizon. His life is beginning to be determined, not by an objective and static social order, but by aspirations, vast as those of Faust, by limitless demands on the future. But it is just this which has led to a breakdown of the unity of life, to the dimming in the human soul of the image and likeness of God, to the disintegration of the unified personality. Man has turned towards external activity, and has ceased to concentrate within himself his inward spiritual forces, and therefore his powers threaten to become exhausted. Faith in the meaning of life has been lost. But the process of the secularisation of life and the conquest of autonomy in all spheres does not mean only the weakening and loss of Christian faith. Secularisation means also sincerity, veracity, the desire and the need not to give the name Christian to that which has ceased to be Christian. Secularisation signifies the beginning of the end of the merely symbolic and external Christianisation of life. If the State is in no sense Christian, we must not call it Christian, we must not force it to bear this label. If thought and knowledge are not lit by the light of Christ, we must not insist on their being Christian in externals. If moral life is not determined by the words of Christ, we must refrain from making it Christian in outward seeming. We must *be*, not seem to be. It would be profoundly untrue to affirm that the basis of the civilisation of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was Christian, that it was determined by the spirit of Christ. This is clearly proved by the catastrophes to which it led in the form of wars and revolutions. Henceforth the Christian faith must be sincere, must spring from the depths of the

soul, for it no longer carries with it any privilege, but rather demands sacrifices. The half-hearted Christianity which is merely external has become impossible, and it is a great gain that it should be so.

In the conception of the world held by the Fathers of the Church and the men of the Middle Ages, the human element in Christianity was not sufficiently recognised.

The humanist outlook shows that this element has begun to manifest itself of its own accord, without waiting for a benediction from on high. This outlook on the contrary, is hostile and opposed to Christianity, and yet it lacks the power to justify and establish the vast claims made by man. Naturalist humanism can find no justification for the supreme importance of man in the universe. With such a conception of the world man is inevitably dominated by his natural and social surroundings, and becomes their slave. But humanism also contains a positive element, for it came to life beneath the invisible influence of Christianity. Whatever we call human, the lessening of cruelty, the growth of pity, of emotional life, all this is the result of the action of Christianity upon the human soul. And the tragedy of humanism consists in this, that the affirmation of the autonomy of man in his detachment from God leads to the destruction and ruin of man. This becomes manifest in the final products of the humanist civilisation, in Nietzsche and Marx, in our technical and capitalist civilisation, in communism, in romantic mysticism and materialism. Human personality can only truly exist in the image and likeness of God. It is only in the God-man Christ that human personality finds itself and receives its eternal significance. In the natural world it is disintegrated and becomes enslaved. The naturalist conception of the world has no power to justify even the idea of human personality, or to defend human freedom. Consistent naturalism denies human freedom. The affirmation of human autonomy, an excessive anthropocentrism, and the destruction of man, his enslavement to his baser passions, that is the fundamental contradiction of naturalist humanism. Man is only saved by the action of the supernatural power of Grace. And now from the depths of the

world without God into which he has fallen, man cries for help, and seeks desperately for the meaning of life and for the supreme power which alone can save him. We have already entered upon an epoch in which the humanist conception of the world is crumbling, in which its inner contradictions are becoming manifest, its incapacity to solve the problems of existence. The recent catastrophe through which the world has passed struck a powerful blow at the illusions of humanism. The world war and the Communist revolution have shaken our faith in progress.

The *élite* of humanist culture is passing through an acute crisis as a result of a somewhat too rough contact with life. It finds no refuge, no escape from the ultimate problems of life and death. Culture cannot remain detached from life. The Christian conscience is faced at present not only with the problem of surmounting the humanist conception of the world, but also with that of conserving the positive elements of humanism. The world is threatened with a return to barbarism, to that animalism which is below rather than above humanity. For this reason the relations of Christianity to the fundamental problems of our age are very complex. Christianity is an eternal truth, independent of time, it delivers us from bondage to the "world", but nevertheless time confronts Christianity with ever new problems which it must solve by the power of its eternal truth. It is not the eternal that must adapt itself to the temporal, but the temporal must be transfigured by the penetration of the eternal. The faith of the Church of Christ is faith in the power of Christianity to solve the problems with which the contemporary conscience is tormented — moral, social and scientific. The fact that a great part of contemporary humanity has abandoned Christianity shows that the problems which are tormenting the human conscience to-day have not been solved by Christianity, or that they have been solved in a manner which is out of date and which no longer satisfies the modern spirit. In order to respond to the poignant appeals of the contemporary conscience we must overcome the dualism between time and eternity, heaven and earth, the world and God. The problem of the relations between

Christianity which is eternal, not modernised in the bad sense of the word, and the world process — that is the central problem. We cannot escape from this process, which is often profoundly hostile to Christianity. The life of the world in its infinite diversity is moving further and further from Christianity. And this is not owing to the fact that the world is becoming more and more sinful, since it has always been sinful ; it is owing to the fact that the world of to-day denies Christianity in principle and is losing the sense of sin itself. Christianity must concentrate its forces in order to regain possession of the world and the processes which are being worked out in it, to bring back civilisation, which is more and more atheist in character, to the principles of Christianity. And this must be done not by a compromise with the world, a process of secularisation, such as is often found in modernist and liberal Christianity. It is from the perfection and completeness of the Christian revelation in its fullness and entirety that must come the solution of the acute problems of the modern world. These problems themselves contain an element of truth, even if the answers given to them are false. But the Christianisation of the life of the world may be understood falsely. The world cannot be brought to Christianity by force ; we cannot forcibly make the State Christian and confessional, submit science and philosophy to theology, This path has already been tried, and it is impossible to return to it. But in all domains of life and culture the light of Christ may be kindled and the quest for religion and the longing for Divine justice may be re-awakened. This is already beginning to be the case ; the light is beginning to shine in the darkness, even in that darkness in which the whole of contemporary humanity, in all domains, from the highest types of human intelligence and being to the most elementary forms of life, is plunged. A freely accepted Christianisation from within, first of society, then of the State, first of the soul, and then of the intellect, is alone possible. Christianity is the religion of God in humanity, and it is only from the depth of the Christological dogma of the theanthropism of Christ that humanity is sanctified and receives its dignity, and that the creative

vocation of man receives its significance. The fact that the anti-Christian world is becoming not only atheist but inhuman makes it easier for Christianity to penetrate all spheres of life, and all domains of human activity. This anti-human character, which is continually increasing, manifests itself in our mechanical and soulless civilisation, in communism, and in many other phenomena. The greater part of contemporary humanity is beginning, in spite of its baptism, to forget the very name of Christ. But only from a superficial point of view can we say that it is in the name of man and of human happiness that the name of Christ is being forgotten. We soon realise that the forgetfulness of Christ leads to the forgetfulness of man, to his transformation into a mere instrument in the hands of inhuman and mechanical forces. When we speak of the conquest of the world by Christianity, we must not fall a prey to optimistic illusions. The powers of sin and evil are great ; the powers hostile to Christianity will have an important part to play. There will be a great cleavage and a violent struggle, the many who are led by evil may appear externally stronger than the select few who return to Christ. But the fixed purpose of the Christian will must not depend on optimist forecasts of the result of the conflict. The duty of Christians in the world remains unchanged whatever the results may be. Christians must realise these ends, carry out their tasks, bring to bear the maximum of spiritual force, which resistance will but serve to strengthen. But the acquisition of an inner harmony and unity are the necessary conditions of such activity of the Christian world.

The problem of the union of Christian humanity in thought and in will is not an easy one, and an undue optimism with regard to it would be out of place. This problem cannot be solved mechanically, it demands an organic process. The development of the Christian conception of the world, of that unified and integral conception which would be capable of overcoming the anarchy of contemporary thought, cannot be accomplished on eclectic and abstract lines. Orthodoxy, Catholicism, and Protestantism, though they appear as different forms of Christianity and are united by

faith in Christ, have nevertheless different conceptions of the world, conditioned by their historical development. The creative process must be accomplished in the depths of the Christian confessions. I believe that the Orthodoxy of the Eastern Churches is emerging from its long period of isolation and from its inadequate preoccupation with contemporary life, to play its part in the universal movement. The truth of the Christian revelation has been preserved in Orthodoxy in its greatest purity, but this truth must be made manifest, developed, and applied to life.

The Orthodoxy of the Eastern Churches took no active part in the historical struggle between Protestantism and Catholicism, and this fact makes it the most favourable ground on which the Christian confessions can meet and arrive at mutual understanding. I have had an opportunity of seeing this in meetings organised by the Orthodox Russians in Paris with French Catholics and Protestants who had never previously met one another.

In Orthodoxy an organic union has been achieved between freedom and the unity of the Church. It is at once the most traditional and the freest, the least authoritative form of Christianity. Western Christianity often finds it difficult to understand this coexistence of traditionalism and liberty, this idea of a Church which is united and strong, but not despotic, for the West thinks in terms of Catholicism and Protestantism, the liberty of the individual and the authority of the Church. But it is just this peculiar character of Orthodoxy which makes it so favourable to the development of the oecumenical movement. In Russian religious thought of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the problem of the relations between Christianity and life, the world and culture, makes itself very acutely felt; there is a strong aspiration towards unity and universality. The conservative forces within the Christian confessions hinder the movement towards mutual approach and the manifestation of universal unity still remains at the stage of self-sufficiency. But the question of a greater manifestation of Christian universalism is inevitably raised by the very character of our epoch. It is to this question that we inevitably come as a result

of the reaction of Christianity to the ideas and problems of contemporary life. The anti-Christian conception of life is becoming more and more unified and is taking on a universal character. This process is to be seen in the free speculation of the "Aufschwung" movement, in science, in modern technical development, in international Communism.

A Christianity which is torn and dismembered, suffering from internal conflict, cannot resist these united and unified forces of anti-Christian thought and will. Alone the universal character of Christianity, no longer merely potential but actual, can form the basis of a unified conception of the world and furnish a reply to the problems which torment our age ; it alone is capable of resisting the onslaught of a hostile world. But how are we to understand this universality ? Universality cannot be attained by a mechanical unification based on an abstract minimum of Christianity for example on faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ, and the rejection of those truths which are the cause of division. In religious life, there can be nothing similar to political coalitions based on mutual concessions.

I can give up nothing of the completeness of my faith, for if I did so I should lose my faith. That alone is living which springs from the force and fullness of faith. I cannot pretend to have abandoned my faith in the Holy Trinity, in the Sacraments, or in the virginity of the Mother of God for the sake of unity with those who do not believe in these things. Religious unity can only be realised on the basis of the maximum, the pleroma. The oecumenical movement will only bear fruit if it aspires to the plenitude of truth, if it is resolved to overcome existing inadequacies. The liberal Protestantism of the nineteenth century, of the type of Ritschl or Sabatier, could not provide a favourable soil for universal union. In it the Christian faith was reduced within too small a scope. Participation in the oecumenical movement by Christians who believe in the Christian revelation, in the divinity of Christ, who accept liberty of conscience, and seek for the fullness of life in the Church, — that alone is capable of bearing fruit. But to accept the eternal truth of Christianity is not enough for this movement, it must

also admit the possibility of a creative activity within Christianity, the existence of new problems of thought and life not yet resolved and demanding a Christian solution. It must recognise in the Orthodoxy of the Eastern Churches the most eschatological form of Christianity, that in which the eschatological spirit of primitive Christianity has been best preserved.

This great apocalyptic expectation was always the side of Christianity opposed to conservative orthodoxy. The Orthodox Church always hoped that the eschatological epoch would come within the Christian dispensation. It is false and crude to imagine the eschatological state of mind as an expectation of the near approach of the end of the world. It signifies also an inner and spiritual turning towards the ultimate problems of life and human destiny, the entry upon another spiritual plane, which does not mean that the end of the world is near in time. And it is through this eschatological spirit that the œcumenicity of Christianity must above all be manifested, and its divisions surmounted, divisions which are bound up with the struggle on the historical plane, and its inevitable limitations. And it is in this spirit that a new and more intimate union with Christ may be attained.

Résumé

A notre époque, les problèmes de l'universalité du Christianisme et des obligations qui en découlent se pose avec une particulière acuité devant toutes les confessions chrétiennes ; toutes, même le Catholicisme, sortent de leur isolement ; quant au Protestantisme, son caractère lui facilite tous les mouvements vers l'unité. Toutefois l'universalité de l'Eglise est encore restée trop potentielle et cachée ; elle doit s'actualiser et se manifester sous l'influence des problèmes mondiaux. Notre époque déchirée, intérieurement anarchique, aspire à l'intégrité de la conception du monde et notre Christianisme doit se réaliser dans la plénitude de la vie. La conscience chrétienne ne peut plus supporter le dualisme entre le Christianisme et une conception du monde, reposant en grande mesure sur des principes non chrétiens ; cette conception est celle de beaucoup de chrétiens de nos jours, entrés dans la vie après une période de sécularisation de la culture, de la société, de toutes les formes de la pensée. Entre le Christianisme et la conception contemporaine du monde, il ne s'est établi qu'un compromis.

La société et la culture médiévales étaient en principe intégrales, organiques et subordonnées à l'idée chrétienne. Mais on ne peut réaliser le Royaume de Dieu extérieurement et par la contrainte ; la théocratie du Moyen Age s'écroule parce qu'elle ne compte pas avec la liberté humaine. L'homme alors commence à éprouver sa liberté dans tous les domaines ; mais ses aspirations faustiennes l'entraînent vers la dissociation de l'intégrité de sa vie, vers l'obscurcissement en lui de l'image de Dieu ; tourné vers l'activité extérieure, il a perdu ses forces spirituelles et sa foi dans le sens de la vie. Que cette sécularisation soit alors sincère. Si l'Etat n'est pas chrétien, ne l'appelons pas ainsi ; si la pensée, la connaissance, la vie morale ont cessé de *l'être*, ne les forçons pas à le *paraître*. Le demi-christianisme est heureusement devenu impossible.

Dans la conception médiévale du monde, l'élément humain du Christianisme n'était pas assez révélé. L'Humanisme se montra hostile au Christianisme et asservit l'homme ; pourtant, c'est à l'influence invisible du Christ qu'est dû l'élément positif de l'Humanisme : développement de la pitié, reconnaissance de la signification absolue de l'âme individuelle. Le drame de l'Humanisme consiste en ceci que l'auto-affirmation de l'homme dans son détachement de Dieu aboutit à l'anéantissement de l'homme lui-même. Ceci devient visible chez Nietzsche, chez Marx, dans la civilisation technique et capitaliste, etc... Ce n'est que dans le Christ Dieu-Homme que toute personnalité humaine trouve sa signification éternelle ; l'homme n'est sauvé que par les forces surnaturelles de la Grâce. Maintenant, dans un monde sans Dieu, il cire au secours. La guerre, la révolution communiste ont ébranlé la foi au progrès humaniste.

La culture humaniste est en crise. Pour la conscience chrétienne, il ne s'agit plus seulement de surmonter la conception humaniste du monde, mais de sauver les éléments humanistes positifs de ce monde menacé d'un retour à la barbarie. Le Christianisme est une Vérité éternelle, indépendante du temps ; elle nous affranchit de l'esclavage de ce monde. Mais le temps pose toujours de nouveaux problèmes au Christianisme ; c'est parce qu'ils n'ont pas été adéquatement résolus qu'une grande partie de l'humanité contemporaine s'est éloignée de lui. La réponse à l'angoisse de la conscience contemporaine doit mettre fin au dualisme du monde et de Dieu. Le Christianisme doit de nouveau concentrer ses forces pour s'emparer du monde et ramener vers le principe chrétien la civilisation athée. Et cela, sans compromis, sans sécularisation ; c'est dans l'intégralité de la révélation chrétienne que doivent se trouver les solutions des problèmes du monde. On ne peut par force l'amener au Christianisme ; mais, dans toutes les sphères de la vie et de la culture, la lumière du Christ peut

s'allumer, la nostalgie de la justice divine peut se réveiller. Déjà la lumière commence à briller dans les ténèbres où l'humanité est plongée. Le fait que le monde antichrétien devient non seulement athée, mais encore inhumain, permet au Christianisme de pénétrer toutes les pshères de la vie. Car c'est une vue superficielle des choses qui fait dire : c'est au nom de l'homme et de son bonheur que le nom du Christ est oublié. Vite on se rend compte que l'oubli du Christ aboutit à la transformation de l'homme par le moyen des forces inhumaines et mécaniques. Ecartons toutefois les illusions optimistes ; les forces hostiles au Christianisme sont grandes. Le devoir des chrétiens n'en demeure pas moins, quels que soient les résultats. Mais l'intégrité et l'unité intérieure du monde chrétien sont les conditions de son activité.

Le développement d'une conception chrétienne unie et intégrale du monde, capable de vaincre l'anarchie contemporaine de la pensée, ne peut s'accomplir d'une manière éclectique et abstraite. L'Orthodoxie, le Catholicisme et le Protestantisme, bien qu'unifiés par la foi dans le Christ, ont des conceptions du monde différentes. C'est dans l'Orthodoxie que la vérité de la Révélation chrétienne a été conservée dans sa plus grande pureté, mais cette vérité doit être manifestée, développée, appliquée à la vie.

N'ayant pas pris une part active à la lutte du Protestantisme et du Catholicisme, l'Orthodoxie orientale est le terrain le plus favorable pour un rapprochement chrétien. Elle est la forme la plus traditionnelle et la moins autoritaire du Christianisme. Habitué à penser dans les catégories catholico-protestantes de la liberté de l'individu et de l'autorité de l'Eglise, le Christianisme occidental saisit difficilement cette idée de l'Eglise intégrale et forte, mais non autoritaire. Cette particularité même de l'Orthodoxie la rend favorable au développement œcuménique. La question d'une grande manifestation de l'universalité chrétienne se pose inévitablement par le caractère de notre époque ; elle est l'aboutissement nécessaire de l'attitude du Christianisme devant les problèmes contemporains.

Le Christianisme déchiré, démembré, souffrant de dissensions intérieures ne peut résister aux forces unies de la pensée et de la volonté anti-chrétiennes ; seule l'universalité du Christianisme en sera capable. Mais elle ne pourra être obtenue par l'unification fondée sur un minimum abstrait du Christianisme, en rejetant tout ce qui divise. Le mouvement œcuménique n'est fécond que s'il aspire à la plénitude de la vérité. Seule est féconde l'union de ceux qui croient en la révélation chrétienne, en la divinité du Christ, qui acceptent la liberté de conscience, cherchent la plénitude de la vie de l'Eglise. Mais c'est encore trop peu : il faut admettre la possibilité

d'une activité créatrice au sein du Christianisme. Reconnaissons l'Orthodoxie orientale comme sa forme la plus eschatologique, celle qui a le mieux conservé l'état d'esprit eschatologique du Christianisme antique. Cette attente apocalyptique est une disposition intérieure orientée vers les grands problèmes de la destinée humaine, vers l'entrée dans un autre plan spirituel, non vers la fin du monde dans le temps. C'est dans ces dispositions d'esprit eschatologiques que doit surtout se manifester l'œcuménicité du Christianisme ; c'est ici que peut s'accomplir une nouvelle et intime rencontre avec le Christ.

Zusammenfassung

Unser Zeitalter wird beherrscht durch den Gedanken der Wiedervereinigung der getrennten Teile der christlichen Welt. Internationale christliche Konferenzen und Organisationen sind das äussere Zeichen hierfür. Alle christlichen Kirchen und Konfessionen sehen sich in gleicher Weise vor das Problem der Universalität des Christentums und die ihnen daraus ergebenden Verpflichtungen gestellt. Wenn wir offen sind, müssen wir uns allerdings gestehen, dass die Universalität der Kirche Christi — der einen universellen Kirche — noch nicht genügend realisiert und manifestiert worden ist und dass die getrennten Glieder der Kirche Christi an der Trennung und die hierdurch entstandene Unvollständigkeit leiden ; beides sind Resultate der Sünde. Aber das Sehnen in unserer Zeit nach Einheit wird immer stärker. Die Universalität des Christentums muss angesichts der Probleme, die sich im geschichtlichen Prozess krystallisiert haben, zur Realität werden. Unser Christentum kann nicht länger nur ein *Teil* unseres Wesens bleiben, sondern muss in der Ganzheit des Lebens lebendig werden. Der Dualismus zwischen Christentum und Leben, Christentum und Kultur, Christentum und der Welt muss vernichtet werden. Oeffnen wir zunächst unsere Augen dafür, dass die Christen in ihrer Einstellung zu Leben und Welt stark geleitet sind durch nicht-christliche Grundsätze. Der Charakter des modernen Geisteslebens und die im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert in Europa vorherrschende Auffassung der Welt ist bestimmt durch die modernen Naturwissenschaften und den Geist des Humanismus. Dem Christen von heute bietet sich eine verweltlichte Kultur und Gesellschaft dar, und diese Verweltlichung erstreckt sich auf alle Geistesgebiete. Das Christentum hat entweder die Verbindung mit dem Leben und so alle Macht über es verloren, oder ist unter die Herrschaft der Welt gefallen und hat somit das Ewige dem Zeitlichen unterstellt. Man hat ferner zwischen Christentum und dem zeitgemässen Begriff der Welt zu einem Kompromis

gegriffen, der einer organischen inneren Umgestaltung aber sehr fern ist. Dies alles sind Wirkungen des die Menschheit zerreissenden Dualismus.

Die Phase der Geschichte, in die wir gestellt sind, hat aber auch schöpferische Kräfte im Menschen freigemacht. In allen Domänen des Lebens, in Kunst und Wissenschaft, Moral und Technik, im wirtschaftlichen und politischen Leben wirkt sich diese neue Freiheit des Menschen aus. Der Mensch hat sich neue Werte geschaffen, hat neue Welten erobert und sein Horizont sowie die Forderungen, die er an die Zukunft stellt, erkennen keinerlei Begrenzungen an. Aber hierin gerade setzt der Zusammenbruch der Einheit des Lebens ein. Der Mensch hat vergessen, sich auf sich selber und seine geistlichen inneren Kräfte zu konzentrieren und hat alle seine Energie einer äusseren Aktivität zugewandt. Er hat den Glauben an den Sinn des Lebens in der Verweltlichung des Lebens verloren. In dieser Verweltlichung erwacht ihm aber auch ein Sinn nach Wahrheit, nach Ernsthaftigkeit; man will mit einer rein symbolischen und äusseren Christianisierung des Lebens ein Ende machen; man will einem Staat, der nicht mehr christlich, einer Geistes- und Gedankenwelt, die nicht mehr durch das Licht Christi erhellt wird, einer Moral, die nicht mehr durch die Worte Christi geleitet ist, nicht länger den Namen Christi geben. Wir würden einen grossen Irrtum begehen, wollten wir behaupten, dass die Zivilisation des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts auf dem Christentum aufgebaut war. Eine solche Behauptung wird negiert durch die grossen Katastrophen — Krieg und Revolution — zu denen diese Zivilisation geführt hat. Deshalb muss der christliche Glaube wieder wach und wirklich ernsthaft werden, er muss aus den Tiefen der Seele von neuem entstehen; ein halbes, rein äusserliches Christentum ist unmöglich geworden, und auch dies ist ein Gewinn unserer Zeit.

Auch die Humanitätslehre, die sich nicht freisprechen kann von einem unsichtbaren Einfluss des Christentums, hat den Menschen nicht befreien können, denn sie trennte ihn von Gott. Wir sehen dies in ihren endgültigen Resultaten, in Nietzsche und Marx, in der technischen und kapitalistischen Zivilisation, im Kommunismus, im romantischen Mystizismus und Materialismus. Der Mensch kann nur wahrhaft in Gott und in einer Angleichung an Ihn bestehen. Nur in dem Gottessohn Christus findet er sich selber und nur durch Ihn erhält er seine ewige Bedeutung. Nur durch die übernatürliche Macht der Gnade kann der Mensch gerettet werden. So sehen wir in unserem Zeitalter des Zusammenbruchs des Humanitätsprinzips neu und klar unsere Unfähigkeit, die vor uns liegenden Probleme zu lösen und dies löst in uns den Schrei nach Gott, damit Er uns

hilft, sie zu klären und den wahren Sinn des Lebens zu finden. Auch der Glaube an einen Fortschritt ist durch den Weltkrieg und die Revolution zerbrochen worden. Die Welt wird bedroht durch einen Rückfall zum Barbarentum, zu einem Animalismus, der die Menschheit auf eine viel tiefere Stufe zurückwirft. So sieht sich das christliche Gewissen nicht nur vor die Forderung gestellt, den Humanitätsbegriff zu überwinden, sondern auch seine positiven Elemente für die Welt zu retten. Die Beziehungen des Christentums zu den fundamentalen Problemen unserer Zeit sind sehr vielgestaltig. Das Christentum enthält eine ewige Wahrheit, die uns von den Ketten der Welt befreit, aber es sieht sich auch immer wieder neuen Aufgaben gegenübergestellt, die es durch die Kraft seiner ewigen Wahrheit lösen muss, aber nicht etwa indem sich das Ewige dem Zeitlichen anpasst, sondern indem das Zeitliche umgebildet und durchdrungen wird durch das Ewige. So heisst Glaube an die Kirche Christi, Glaube an die Macht des Christentums, die heutigen Probleme zu lösen, seien sie moralischer, sozialer oder wissenschaftlicher Art. Wir müssen den Dualismus zwischen Zeit und Ewigkeit, Himmel und Erde, Welt und Gott überwinden, damit das Christentum wieder Besitz von der Welt ergreife und wir eine Zivilisation zurückgewinnen, die durch die christlichen Prinzipien beherrscht wird. Nicht durch Kompromisse sondern nur durch die Fülle und Ganzheit der christlichen Offenbarung kann dies geschehen. Diese innere Umgestaltung wird sich aber niemals durch Zwangsforderungen vollziehen, sondern das Licht Christi muss in alle Bereiche des Lebens und der Kultur getragen werden und das Verlangen nach göttlicher Gerechtigkeit muss von neuem in den Herzen erweckt werden. Die Verchristlichung unserer Zeit kann nur von innen, aus der Seele des Menschen kommen, dann wird sie Besitz von der Gesellschaft ergreifen und erst später kann sie sich auf den Intellekt und den Staat ausdehnen. Um aber wirklich Erfolg in der Neudurchdringung der Welt zu haben, muss die Christenheit zu einer inneren Harmonie und Einheit untereinander kommen.

Das Problem der Vereinigung der christlichen Welt in Gedanken und Willen ist aber nicht leicht zu lösen und ein seichter Optimismus wäre hier schlecht am Platze. Dieses Problem kann wiederum nur in einem organischen Vorgang seine Lösung finden. Orthodoxie, Katholizismus und Protestantismus — wenn auch geeignet im Glauben an Christus — haben durch die so ganz verschiedene historische Entwicklung verschiedene Weltanschauungen gewonnen. Die Wahrheiten der christlichen Offenbarung haben sich hierbei am reinsten in der Orthodoxen Kirche erhalten, sie müssen aber von neuem lebendig und dem Leben zugänglich gemacht werden. Durch

eine in Jahrhunderten aufrechterhaltene isolierte Stellung und das sich Fernhalten von den historischen Glaubenskämpfen, die zwischen Katholizismus und Protestantismus entbrannten, bietet sich in der Orthodoxie der östlichen Kirche ein geeigneter Boden für die Verbindung der Kirchen. Der orthodoxe Glaube verbindet in organischer Weise persönliche Freiheit und Einheit der Kirche, hier finden wir die stärkste Tradition und gleichzeitig die grösste Freiheit. Durch diesen eigenartigen Charakter scheint sie am besten geeignet, den ökumenischen Gedanken zu entwickeln. Im religiösen Gedankenleben Russlands des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts spielt das Problem der Beziehungen zwischen Christentum und Leben, Welt und Kultur eine grosse Rolle, auf der anderen Seite ist der brennende Wunsch nach Einheit und Universalität immer akuter geworden. Aber auch die anti-christlichen Kräfte haben sich mehr und mehr vereinigt und gehen kooperativ voran. Wie kann eine Christenheit, die in sich zerrissen ist und an inneren Konflikten leidet, den zusammengeschlossenen anti-christlichen Kräften standhalten? Nur der universelle Charakter des Christentums kann die Basis einer geeinigten Weltanschauung und eine Antwort auf die bitteren Probleme unseres Zeitalters geben. Aber wie können wir diese Universalität verstehen? Sie darf nicht eine mechanisch zusammengeschlossene Einheit eines Minimumchristentums sein. Nichts von der Fülle des eigenen Glaubens der verschiedenen Konfessionen darf aufgegeben werden, denn wahres Leben entspringt nur aus der Kraft und Ganzheit des Glaubens. Die religiöse Fülle kann nur auf der Basis eines Maximums verwirklicht werden. Die ökumenische Bewegung kann nur dann Früchte tragen, wenn sie nach der Fülle und Ganzheit des Glaubens strebt. Allein die Vereinigung von Christen in der ökumenischen Bewegung, die an die christliche Offenbarung, die Göttlichkeit Christi glauben, die die Freiheit des Gewissens annehmen und die Fülle des Lebens innerhalb der Kirche suchen, kann Resultate bringen. Allerdings ist dies noch nicht genug, sondern auch die schöpferische Aktivität des Christentums, das Vorhandensein neuer Probleme in Gedankenwelt und Leben, die eine christliche Lösung fordern, muss anerkannt werden. In dem eschatologischen Geist, der am reinsten in der Orthodoxie der östlichen Kirche bewahrt worden ist, muss sich die Oekumenizität des Christentums vollziehen, in diesem Geist müssen die historischen Zersplitterungen überwunden und um eine neue innigere Verbindung mit Christus gerungen werden.

Ancient Syncretism and Modern Christianity

J. de ZWAAN

The problem of the relationships of Christianity to non-Christian systems is not a new one. The Christian Church has had to deal with it from the very first period of its existence. It may therefore be useful to ask what lessons we may learn from the struggle between Christianity and Syncretism in earlier centuries. To this end we should consider three points, three conceptions of ancient syncretism which have a meaning for our own time. They are: the God-consciousness, the Church-idea, and the Conception of Life. In dealing with these three aspects of the question we do not have to mention things which are buried in the past, or which belong to an absolutely foreign mentality. They are familiar to all Christians and to those who have come into contact with Christianity.

I.

Syncretism of Antiquity is a phenomenon of the time of the Emperors. It was a period in which the belief in an objective unseen world was widespread. The anthropomorphic names given to the gods were only indications of this world. There is one divine "Something" which includes a number of differentiations, of more limited divine entities. These the devotee should worship in the ancestral way: a question of piety, but also of self-interest. The peculiar thing was the general acceptance of the fact that the different national mythologies ultimately intended to worship one and the same divine world, and also, when it came to the point, that these individual gods were merged into the one, universal and vague Divinity. This represents the objective side of Syncretism, an amalgam of various religions and gods.

There is also a subjective side to the matter ; the more practical question — what meaning all this had for the religious life of the individual ? This will be discussed later.

Syncretism in ancient days can be compared to the unity of basic religious convictions that was characteristic of the religious life at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century. In those days it was generally believed that the three words God, Virtue and Immortality were all wisdom in a nutshell. Everybody seemed to agree that there must exist a "natural religion", as the existence of one God was considered self-evident.

Consciously or unconsciously this seemed to imply that all concrete religions, Christianity not excepted, could only be corruptions of the one religion created by Nature itself. A purified Christianity, was looked upon as the nearest approach to this natural faith, although Confucianism (or what was mistaken for it) was considered a serious competitor in the struggle for this title of honour. These views were held by the superficially learned world of those days, and echoed by the broad masses.

The religious atmosphere of both epochs was very similar. In the case of ancient syncretism it was also a sort of philosophical renaissance which had prepared the way for it. The idea of the all-including divine entity was propagated and popularized by the scholars. Natural science also played a big part, just as during the age mentioned before ; and finally — to complete the analogy — history, in the first centuries of the Roman Empire, had also created conditions which made this particular attitude possible.

In many respects, but on a much larger scale, we now experience a similar situation : what once happened round the Mediterranean during the classical period, and once more in Western and Central Europe during the time of Napoleon, now manifests itself for the third time as a phenomenon of world-wide significance. These four elements : a particular God-consciousness, philosophical convictions, scientific thought and the historical situation created an impact of immense influence. Even Christianity could not stand its pressure and had somehow to change its orientation. Therefore, in

order to understand why and how this took place, we must now consider each one of these threads in turn.

The first great characteristic of ancient philosophy, no matter which system one takes, is this big fact : at its origins it starts from Nature, not from God. In Nature Greek (and therefore Western) philosophy finds its first inspiration. Its task was thus conceived : to demonstrate clearly what this idea of "Nature" implied, to capture it in a net of notions which follow logically from each other. The process was always the same. Whether "the world" — i.e. natural phenomena "outside" was considered, or "the soul" — i.e. the inner life of man with its conceptions, desires, virtues and vices, the attempt was made to proceed from phenomena to causes and the ideal was : to arrive at a rational understanding about the great "Something" that lies hidden behind all causes. Consequently this last divine essence was never looked upon as a will. The primordial Entity can never be a thing comparable to the Self of man. Because of its origin this philosophy was forced to look upon the divine as "a Power". It could not escape from its scientific presuppositions. The supreme Something, in spite of many symbolical expressions, remains with ancient Syncretism the law, the rational, the non-arbitrary, the non-personal. It would lead us too far to compare these thoughts with the Chinese Tao, or with certain Indian conceptions. Many analogies could also be mentioned among the "religions" of European philosophers.

The second thread was formed by ancient natural science — a fact which we can easily understand as we know how science, in those days, still had such a curious conception of nature. To the masses its prestige was the same as that of Astrology. As "spirit" was considered a more ethereal form of matter characterised by "regularity" and "law", it was thought that sun, moon and stars must be great masses of spirit. And it was also believed, on the same basis, that the regular motion of the stars, especially the very particular behaviour of the sun, moon and planets, proved that they were not merely nominally, but in a real sense, gods.

This means, however, that the gods can be worshipped,

but that man's prayers cannot be heard and that there is no such thing as spiritual contact with the divine. It is an impersonal law which governs the influence which the gods have on the destiny of man : a grain could as well pray to the millstone that threatens to crush it. The influence of the heavenly bodies on the earth is called "fatum", and fatalism was the natural consequence.

I have mentioned history as the third thread. The conquests of Alexander the Great, extending into India, the later consolidation of the immense and in its essence semi-oriental Roman Empire had united so many nationalities under its sway that History itself seemed to belie the ancient principle of purely national mythologies. The many "gods" could only be considered as symbols of the One Unseen which is the same for all nations.

These three threads have naturally a very close relation to the fourth and most fundamental one : the "God-consciousness". There is a difference between the idea of God and God-consciousness. A moment's reflection will save us from confusion on this point. The "idea of God" is a technical, theological term, while "consciousness of God" can be used in theology, but transcends its realm. One can talk about the "idea" of beauty and about the "consciousness" of beauty, or about the idea of justice and the consciousness of justice. For instance a man born in a matriarchal society where the unity of the family, and family law, are centred in the mother, must necessarily have a consciousness of justice corresponding to this social environment. Many things will be justice for him, which to us are the exact opposite. It will remain a mystery to us, how he comes to feel that way. We can only, after observation and reasoning, construct certain motives that might lead us, if we could put ourselves in the man's place, to the same appreciation or indignation. If we do that we think we have "understood" why he felt thus and no differently. But it is, of course, not quite the same : it is only a substitute for the real insight into the working of the matriarchal consciousness. Consciousness is a direct spontaneous process. If we reason about it (and we must in order to understand it), we are

bound to misinterpret the reality of it in some way or another.

This means that spontaneous consciousness is a matter of intuition, i.e. a knowledge through direct contact of the spirit with reality, while "ideas" belong to the intellect, which brings isolated dead facts, through analysing and classifying, into a higher unity which has logical evidence. Intuition seems to give us immediate access to reality, while the intellect follows the curves of analysis, observation and reasoning.

We can feel beauty, but not understand it. For these reasons I must speak about the God-consciousness of ancient syncretism, rather than about the idea of God. The first leads us to things that touch us directly to day, the second would force us into mere scholarly discussions. For the contact between God and man is a reality that does not start with an intellectual effort from our side, but with revelation from God's side. Of course I would not deny that very soon the intellect, taking this consciousness as its base, will build its own construction on it.

To repeat our question : what is the impact of the three elements of ancient syncretism, which we have described, on the God-consciousness ?

The answer is clear. On the negative side it means that the divine reality is felt as something impersonal and abstract, like some law or force of nature. On the positive side it means idol worship. Man's inherent consciousness of a Creator who is accessible to the needs of the soul cannot easily be suppressed, and breaks out in the service of "lower unities" in the invisible world. This meant in the ancient world the efflorescence of the so-called mystery religions. But exactly because of the fact that this elementary need — not merely religious egoism — was embodied in Attis, in Serapis, Isis, Mithras and a score of others, these gods became truly substitutes for the personal Creator — God. It was idol worship in the full sense of the word, mingled with real religion.

As a consequence the element of egoism increased ; the mystery cults became means to further merely individual aims. This is very natural — his God degraded from

Creator and Personality to a highest physical power, man is left alone and isolated and becomes egocentric. The continuation of his personality becomes all-important to him ; and if magical practices can in any way guarantee this to him, he will by no means let them escape from his grasp.

In the first centuries this philosophical conception of God deeply penetrated into Christianity. What happened then, will — if God does not interfere — happen again in India and China, and will have the same consequences as it had and still often has with us.

The consciousness of God, which originally lived by God's revelation in the incarnate and written Word, that gave it its real content, was elaborated in Greek fashion into an "idea of God" by the Christian Church of the fourth and fifth centuries. The divinity of Neoplatonic philosophy which is not the same as the God of revelation was venerated greatly, and under Christian terms. The consequences were essentially the same as the ones we have noticed with pagan Syncretism ; the reduction of real God-consciousness to a worship of "lesser unities". Here is the origin of the religious sentiment which expressed itself in the adoration of Mary and the Saints. In our part of the world the "divinity" of German Idealism has succeeded in penetrating into many dogmatic systems, and gradually also into many a Christian community. The result may be found in the present interest in theosophy, occultism, anthroposophy and sacramentalism.

Wherever in any missionary field, for instance in one of the young oriental Churches, where forces like the abstract, vague conceptions of God in Islamic mysticism or the philosophical, naturalistic conception of some oriental religions are at hand, a compromise might come about between these forces on one hand and Christianity on the other, and we would see a repetition of what happened in the Middle Ages at the time of the birth of the Roman-Christian religiosity. The message of the Gospel — God's act of redemption in Christ — will then disappear behind superstition. Our conclusion therefore must be that we are taught by ancient syncretism that Christianity degenerates as soon as it makes

a compromise with its belief in the first article of the apostolic confession of faith : "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth".

This conception of Creation means that it is Will and not a Power as philosophy always has it ; that creation is God's work, not the emanation of a divine and mysterious substance; that man is a fallen creature, and not a spark of the divine that has got to emancipate itself from matter, through devout practices ; that man, created after God's image but fallen through sin, can be freed by the Will and Deed of God and brought to a future state of as yet unknowable but complete and perfect Reality.

These are absolutely central thoughts to Christianity, if it is to remain pure. You cannot do with them whatever you please. The experience with ancient syncretism shows us how the consciousness of God, if the thought of creation is not taken seriously, can only find its expression in superstition.

II.

The syncretistic influence on the idea of the Church has been very strong indeed, and continues to be so. In the mystery-cults man approached his God not in the ancient normal way as a member of a tribe or of a people but as an individual. This may seem natural to us, but it was a new thing to the Greek, Roman, or the Jew of those days. Of course individual worship, prayer, sacrifice, and piety have always existed. But it meant that the individual approached the God of the community to which he belonged. The inhabitant of Athens turned to the guardian-goddess of his town ; the Greek to the national deity of his race, to Zeus, Father of gods and men. There is a bond between particular gods and particular groups of men, which is the unconscious presupposition of all worship both for the community and for the individual.

In the mystery religions it was different. Historical conditions contributed to this : In the Empire of Alexander the Great and his successors the veneration of foreign gods, to whose sphere one did not properly belong, had become a

matter of political duty and piety for many officials. The world traffic had made the worship of foreign gods a daily spectacle, while another contributing cause may be seen in the presence of thousands of foreign slaves. The glory of various gods, and the stories about their power became a lure for many who did not belong to the same national group.

The main point is, however, that these "mystery gods", who were chiefly foreign gods for the leading nations of the ancient civilised world, did not distinguish between men of different nationalities, nor between free citizens and slaves, nor even between men and women. Everyone could turn to either Attis, Serapis, Isis, Mithras, the Cabyles, or any other of these gods. Apart from a few demands of a ritual or moral nature, everybody was welcome who would go through the preparatory measures before assisting at the mystery-service.

Syncretism then, knew only of separate individuals. In so far as man believed in a future life he was looking for individual salvation. There was no question of a common task, of being used by God in the realisation of a plan that may give meaning to the terrible struggle of mankind in which our small lives are involved; nothing more than the very limited and egocentric expectation of individual protection by the gods, in to whose mysteries one had been initiated, and of the assurance of future life. It was really a transplantation of earthly and rather primitive conditions in a higher sphere. In the ancient world it was judged exceedingly useful to be a client or even slave to an influential aristocrat. Such aristocrats were now also looked for in the invisible world.

For many Christians of our day Christianity is also merely a question of personal salvation. If one studies the long chain of conditions and causes of this degeneration one will find at the end, as one of them, the powerful influence of syncretism at the time of the rather external Christianisation in the fourth and fifth centuries. But essentially Christianity is something quite different. The crusader's standard contains the great words of Christ Himself at Gethsemane; "Not my will but Thine be done". Christianity objectifies

itself in the idea of the Church and God's Will, God's plan, is at the heart of this idea. It is not our common belief in salvation through Jesus Christ that creates the unity of Christendom. This unity is quite independent from our preference or organisation. It is due to the fact that God chose to create one "body". That body is the organism that Christ Himself uses as a means to fulfil God's plan with this world. Not our vocation and mission are decisive but what God was and is. This is expressed in the Bible by the confession that to Him is given all power in heaven and on earth.

When this conception of the united Church became obscured by the syncretistic ideal of the masses who considered the Church as a herd of individuals, it became necessary to emphasize the external side of unity, that is the organisation, the hierarchical parallel to the Roman State. It had to be useful, adapted to the winning and maintaining of souls in order to transform their collective power into a corporate one. Because of this, the conception of the Church became a matter of human efficiency, of the adaptation of dogma to philosophy, and of church policy to the worldly powers. Organisation and efficiency are great things, given to us by God through the gift of human intelligence, but when the Church-conception is obscured by the interest in individual salvation, they become masters instead of servants.

In Christianity God as Creator comes first, with Christ Who fulfils God's plan for humanity. The precious "self" and its temporal as well as eternal interests come second. We worship a crucified Christ. With that cross we cannot compromise! In a world where Christ had to be crucified, Christianity is, in its essence, something quite different from a group of adoring individuals, each of whom seems to be so extraordinarily sure of his particular blissful future prospects.

In such a world the future hides a wider prospect than ideals like "World peace through the League of Nations", or "through regularisation of production and distribution to social justice". The Bible directs our attention to "new heavens and a new earth", to a new creation of God, where those human potentialities may grow up that are now stifled,

a future that may give meaning and fulfilment to the extraordinary struggles of mankind, even when our entire planetary system is reduced to atoms !

These thoughts are the centre of the Church-conception ; Christianity as the "body" of Christ, used to fulfill God's plan, is the high aim for its existence. What syncretism did to Christianity in ancient days, should open our eyes to the fact that the representation of Christianity as a matter of personal salvation, of camouflaged egoism, is a false and dangerous one.

III.

In the third place, "the conception of life" is an important point in tracing the influence of Syncretism of ancient days. Here again the past has spoken clearly, so that it may teach us something. Although the period of rationalism in Europe, the so-called Enlightenment is a thing of the past, and although the materialism which grew out of it is now generally rejected among the more cultured groups, some traces of it have consciously or unconsciously remained. In some European countries the second half of the 19th century indeed brought about another wave of a similar nature. There are even now countries, especially those where Christianity is only known in its Roman Catholic form and where philosophical thinking draws but little attention, which are still deeply influenced by it.

The first tidal wave of rationalism came directly after the resurrection of mathematics and the discoveries of astronomy. The 17th and 18th centuries were most deeply affected by this kind of scientific thinking. The great philosopher Descartes was first of all a mathematician ; so was Pascal. Huygen's countryman, the Dutch Jew Spinoza, writes on "Ethics, demonstrated in mathematical fashion". This new approach had captured the imagination, and since it seemed that nature and spirit revealed such a simple structure, it was thought that rationalism would offer the key to all the riddles of the universe. Whatever threatened to put that hope to shame was carefully neglected. Typical

of this state of mind was, for instance, the official declaration by a famous European University that meteoric-stones did not exist, because their existence would be against natural law. In the meantime they kept on falling from heaven. "Ghosts" or other strange phenomena were judged as impossible. The establishment of a Society for Psychical Research would have been out of question in those days.

The second tidal wave of rationalism came during the second half of the 19th century, at a time when people suffered again from too much self-confidence. It came as an after effect of the discoveries of chemistry and the development of technique. It is natural therefore that "Force and Matter" became its magical formula. What could not be explained by these two factors, was considered an illusion and was not taken into consideration by science and scientific thinking. To day we are living under the auspices of biological science. Spengler's "Decline of the West" is a typical instance of the transferring of biological symbolism into historical research. Such symbolism, however, implies a good deal. Fortunately its consequences are obvious. The famous author does not know of any other way out of the great riddle of the meaning of world-history, than the one of which we have just spoken. The different cultures — the principal types of human relations to the given natural and spiritual realities as they express themselves in the whole range of life — are something like plants to him. Like the fern growth of the coal period, which had its time of growth, of maximal development, and of decline, until it finally deteriorated and died out, the formidable spiritual phenomena have to obey an as yet undiscovered law of nature. The great and eminently human question which Christianity dares to ask, the question of "the conception of life" is not answered. His answer could only be one of despair. He never asks himself what force it is that allows no single culture to maintain itself. He is not troubled about the meaning of it all. When ultimately the last culture is consummated, and the earth no longer lodges living beings, there is nothing left as a result of the tremendous struggle of mankind for the realisation of moral values and

the creation of spiritual personality. Thus the life of humanity has no meaning whatever.

But one question remains. From where does the conviction come that the striving for "culture" is justified?

This problem was already evaded by the classic philosophers. It is natural that they did. From their presuppositions they would have to arrive at an answer which would mean the destruction, the senseless and meaningless destruction of everything human. As God is reduced to "nature", and man becomes a particle of it, this result is inevitable.

Christianity still is to-day, as it was in the ancient days of the struggle with Syncretism, the great progressive force, the one and solitary champion of the only conception of life according to which man can live as Man, and life is worthy of being lived because it has a meaning and a future. Thus we return to our first thesis: the Christian knows that he is created by a divine Will.

In Greek-Oriental thought man is considered as a spark of a divine fire, as a particle of a divine essence. Mysticism and asceticism are the immediate consequences of this view. Mysticism deludes man as to his real being. Asceticism tells him not to care about the *milieu* where God has placed him, and not to do that for which God has created him. The one and the other are forms of pride. It is pride to act as an enemy toward life, and as a stranger towards the physical. This pride leads, moreover to its own downfall. It runs into the blind alley of quietism: life does not reveal its deep meaning to the man who wants to escape from it, and leaves him alone with the erroneous idea that human activity does not serve any greater purpose, and that it can have no other result than to draw him deeper down into misery.

In the Greek-Occidental way, man is considered as a particle of Nature. The result is not better although it leads in the opposite direction. Its consequence is secularism, which makes man the enemy of the spirit, a slave of his ingenious machinery, sceptical as to the things that belong to the higher values of life. The motor-man's conception of life has no place for religion, art, justice, morality, ethics, or other elements of higher humanity. This time it is not

the pride of an imagined being, but of limitless activity, that leads to destruction. Here again one arrives at a deadlock, but this time by meaningless activity, the desire for power, for pleasure, money, through which man's energy is spent without gain to his life : "What shall it profit a man to gain the world..."

Along the Oriental line, mysticism and asceticism annihilate the meaning of life. Along the Occidental line secularism and agnosticism arrive at the same result. Both ways must lead to this, for if one thinks of God as an unknown factor, as an "x" in one's view of life, and of life as another unknown factor "y", one has practically reduced to zero the two dominating factors in the account of one's life. It must end in despair. For this account is the only one that really matters. It is the chart by which we have to sail whether we like it or not.

Only Christianity looks at these things squarely. It answers the question what this "x" practically means to us, and what the "y" says as to the course of our lives. It takes man as he really is, and the human task as it offers itself to us. Syncretism never does. It avoided the issue in ancient times, and it does so to-day.

The conclusion of our study is therefore, that the basic thought of Christianity is the historical revelation of God. In the midst of this mysterious creation, which certainly embraces "more things in heaven and earth" than are dreamt of in any philosophy, the real God, Creator of heaven and earth, has a design and has selected a "people" for this purpose.

Against this design and this "people" of God, all other forces are ultimately helpless. Syncretism leads to a complex of fear which seeks protection in magical practices and superstition. The Christian knows himself to be a member of Christ's Body, elevated to a higher state, servant to the divine plan, never afraid since higher Wisdom is active. This is the Christian view of life which cannot be combined with any of the characteristics of Syncretism.

But if, as in a period of decline, like that during the external Christianisation of the Greek-Roman world, the

two become merged, then the result indeed is deplorable. The Roman State became "Christian", and Christianity became a state religion. Ancient syncretism was Christianized but it did not change essentially but simply in word and form. Instead of the great idea of the "new Israel" came the practical Roman idea of a Church-State. Instead of security in Christ, came cowardly individualism. The priest with his mysterious official power took the place of the faithful at the Lord's table. Woe to him who is excluded from it by the priest: his immortal soul will not be saved. Woe to him who is excommunicated by the priest: he is left alone in a world full of evil forces and isolated from God.

Thus the entire conception of life is altered: God and the assurance of His victory are no longer primary. Christ's real and all-including presence is no longer experienced as a life-giving force. The new heavens and the new earth are no longer the ideal for which man is craving. In its place comes fear for the future; the day of judgment becomes the topic of the day. Man is afraid of the world. He calls to the "saints", to the "Queen of Heaven", to their "merits", and counts on his own ascetic merits. He even talks of Christ's "merits", "gained" for us in a far-away past. Indeed, this "work of Christ" even becomes the centre of theological thinking. Of God Himself man is especially afraid. He clings therefore to the visible "glory" of the Church, and talks about the infallibility of its "means of grace", and about its apostolical tradition through which its priests possess the only true professional grace. These are some of the things resulting from the ancient spirit of syncretism, as it infused itself into Christianity.

For us this should mean that our Christian message should never be one of dread or of individualistic fear, but one of the glad assurance of Christ's Lordship. Otherwise we get a repetition of what has already revealed itself once in our history. At the present time Syncretism again threatens to steal back into Christianity, as soon as the conception of Creation is pushed into the background. Again it will spread, as soon as we preach Christianity as a mere individualistic religion of "my salvation first". For Christianity

and the idea of the Church are one in Christ. It means that Christ works at something in which we may participate. This "something" is the Creator's plan. Only thus the Christian view of life can cure humanity. Christ knows what is entrusted to Him. Our life has meaning in so far as we help Him, although we remain in the light of eternity "unprofitable servants".

Zusammenfassung

Das Problem der Beziehungen des Christentums zu nicht-christlichen Systemen ist nicht neu; seit ihren ersten Tagen hat die christliche Kirche ihm gegenübergestanden und so mag ein Vergleich des Kampfes zwischen Christentum und dem Synkretismus früherer Jahrhunderte interessant und lehrreich für uns sein. Drei Begriffe des alten Synkretismus haben eine besondere Bedeutung für unsere Zeit, dies sind „, das Gottesbewusstsein, der Gedanke der Kirche und die Lebensauffassung “.

I

Der Synkretismus des Altertums ist eine Erscheinung der Cäsarenzeit. Die Religion jener Periode war eine Verschmelzung verschiedener Religionen und Gottheiten. Man glaubte an ein göttliches „, Etwas “, über das nur sehr vage Vorstellungen herrschten. Dieser Synkretismus des Altertums hat gewisse Parallelen mit manchen Grundanschauungen, die zu Ende des 18. und Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts gehalten wurden. Zu dieser Zeit glaubte man, alle Weisheit in den drei Worten „, Gott, Tugend und Unsterblichkeit “ ausdrücken zu können, und man war allgemein der Ansicht, dass alle konkreten Religionen — das Christentum mit einbegriffen — Korruptionen der einen Religion seien, die durch die Natur selber geschaffen war. Auch philosophische Tendenzen haben ein starkes Gewicht in dieser Entwicklung gehabt und ferner hat die Geschichte die Vorbedingung für diese besondere Einstellung möglich gemacht. In ähnlicher Weise, nur auf viel breiterer Basis, erleben wir heute eine fast gleiche Situation. Vier Hauptelemente sind von stärkstem Einfluss auf eine Entwicklung dieser Art gewesen : ein besonderes Gottesbewusstsein, philosophische Ueberzeugungen, wissenschaftliche Ideen und die historische Lage. Und selbst das Christentum hat dem Einfluss dieser Elemente nicht standhalten können. Um den Vorgang wirklich verstehen zu können, müssen wir die einzelnen Elemente näher studieren.

Das bedeutendste Charakteristikum der alten Philosophie ist, dass sie nicht Gott zum Ausgangspunkt machte sondern die Natur. Ob es sich um innere oder äussere Dinge handelte, der Prozess war der gleiche, dass man von der Erscheinung ausgehend die Ursache suchte und von dort verstandesmässig zu dem grossen „Etwas“ kam, das hinter allen Dingen steht. Dieses letzte Göttliche wurde niemals als Wille empfunden sondern als Macht, als unpersönliches Gesetz oder, in der Terminologie der alten Naturwissenschaft ausgedrückt, als „Geist“. Das heisst mit anderen Worten, dass man dieses Göttliche, dieses unpersönliche Gesetz wohl verehere, dass es aber kein geistiges Band zwischen dem Göttlichen und dem Menschen gab. Diese Einstellung musste zum Fatalismus führen. Ein anderer Faktor war die Geschichte. Im römischen Reich, das so viele verschiedene Nationalitäten unter seinem Zepter vereinigte, konnte das Prinzip der reinen nationalen Mythologie nicht mehr bewahrt bleiben und die einzige Möglichkeit, die verschiedenen nationalen Gottheiten zu vereinigen, war, dass man diese als Symbol des einen unsichtbaren Göttlichen ansah. Diese ebengenannten Elemente haben eine enge Verbindung zu dem letzten, fundamentalsten, dem „Gottesbewusstsein“. Ich möchte hier eine strenge Unterscheidung machen zwischen der Idee von Gott und dem Gottesbewusstsein. Während der erste Begriff durch den Intellekt in Beobachtung, Analyse und einem vernunftmässigen Denken aufgebaut wird, ist das zweite ein direkter, intuitiver, spontaner Vorgang. Der erste führt uns zu scholastischen Diskussionen, der zweite zu ganz direkten, persönlichen Dingen. Um nun die Frage zu wiederholen: Welche Wirkung haben die drei Elemente des alten Synkretismus auf das „Gottesbewusstsein“? so heisst die Antwort, von der negativen Seite gesehen, dass die göttliche Realität nur als etwas unpersönliches, abstraktes empfunden wird (Naturgesetz, Kraft), und die positive Seite heisst Götzendienst. Das dem Menschen innewohnende Bewusstsein eines Schöpfers, der für die Nöte der Seele erreichbar ist, kann nicht so leicht unterdrückt werden und bricht hervor in dem Dienst der „niederen Gottheiten“. Dies liess in der alten Welt die sogenannten „Religions-Mysterien“ aufblühen. Attis, Serapis, u.s.w. ersetzen den Begriff des persönlichen Schöpfers, Gottes. Das egoistische Element in dieser Verehrung wurde immer stärker und der Mysterien-Kult wurde immer mehr ein Mittel rein egoistischer Ziele. Wenn Gott der Schöpfer, der Persönliche herabgemindert wird zu einem Naturgesetz, dann wird der Mensch vereinsamt, isoliert und egozentrisch.

Dieser philosophische Gottesbegriff, von dem ich eben sprach, hat in den ersten Jahrhunderten das Christentum stark durchdrungen.

Das Gottesbewusstsein, das ursprünglich durch das geoffenbarte und geschriebene Wort lebendig geworden war, wurde im 4. und 5. Jahrhundert durch die christliche Kirche nach griechischem Beispiel umgewandelt in eine „Idee von Gott“. Die Folgeerscheinung dieser Umwandlung ist ähnlich wie die des heidnischen Synkretismus: das wahre Gottesbewusstsein wurde herabgemindert zu einer Verehrung „niederer Einheiten“ (Marien- und Heiligen-Verehrung). Auch in unseren Tagen droht die Gefahr, dass überall da, wo wir in nähere Verbindung kommen mit anderen Religionen (Gottesbegriff im islamischen Mystizismus oder der philosophische Begriff orientalischer Religionen) ein Kompromis zustande kommt zwischen diesen Kräften und dem Christentum. Das Evangelium der Sühne Gottes in Christus wird dann einem Aberglauben Platz machen. Und wieder gibt uns der alte Synkretismus eine Lehre für unsere Tage, dass wenn das Christentum in Bezug auf den ersten Glaubensartikel: „Ich glaube an Gott den Vater, Allmächtigen, Schöpfer Himmels und der Erden“ einen Kompromis erlaubt, dies zu seinem Verfall führt. Dieser Glaubensartikel sagt klar, dass Gott ein „Wille“ ist und nicht eine „Macht“, wie ihn die Philosophie fasst. Dies bringt weiter zum Ausdruck, dass der Mensch nach Gottes Bild geschaffen, durch die Sünde zum Fall kam, aber durch den Willen und die Tat Gottes wieder einer noch unbekannten Zukunft bestimmt ist, die eine vollständige und vollkommene Wirklichkeit sein wird. Dies sind Kerngedanken des Christentums, die wir nicht verändern dürfen, wenn das Christentum rein erhalten bleiben soll. Der alte Synkretismus zeigt, dass das Gottesbewusstsein, sobald wir den Gedanken der Schöpfung nicht ernst nehmen, in Aberglauben ausartet.

II.

Der Synkretismus hat einen starken Einfluss auf die Idee der Kirche gehabt und übt diesen noch jetzt aus. In den frühen Zeiten traten die Menschen vor Gott als Glieder eines Volkes oder Stammes, aber nicht als Einzelindividuen. Durch den Mysterien-Kult ändert sich dies. Zu dieser inneren Umstellung haben wieder die geschichtlichen Begebenheiten stark beigetragen. Im Reiche Alexander des Grossen war es für manche Beamte eine politische Pflicht, ihnen fremde Gottheiten anzubeten; weiter spielt eine gewisse Rolle das menschliche Element der Ehrfurcht vor fremden Gottheiten, die wegen ihrer Fremdheit und der märchenhaften Erzählungen über ihre Macht einen so starken Eindruck hinterliessen. Drittens wurde

in dem Mysterien Kult kein Unterschied der Nation gemacht ; jeder konnte am Gottesdienst teilnehmen, nachdem er einige äussere Formalitäten erledigt hatte.

Der Synkretismus richtete sich dann später nur an den Einzelmenschen. Sofern man an ein zukünftiges Leben glaubte, war dies in der Idee der persönlichen „Seligkeit“ verstanden. Der Gedanke einer gemeinsam zu lösenden Aufgabe, oder dass Gott eine Absicht mit uns habe, dass wir Werkzeug sein sollten in der Durchführung Seines Planes, lag den Menschen absolut fern. Auch für viele Christen unserer Tage scheint das Christentum nur zur persönlichen Erlösung nützlich zu sein. Wenn man die geschichtliche Entwicklung verfolgt, kann man beobachten, wie dieser Gedanke im Synkretismus einen starken Einfluss ausgeübt hat, besonders in der sehr äusserlichen Verchristlichung im 4. und 5. Jahrhundert. Christentum heisst aber etwas anderes als persönliche Erlösung. Die Kreuzfahrer haben seinen Sinn verstanden, als sie die Worte Christi in Gethsemane „Nicht mein, sondern Dein Wille geschehe“, auf ihr Banner schrieben. Das Christentum objektiviert sich selbst im Gedanken der Kirche, und der Kernpunkt dieses Gedankens ist der Wille und Plan Gottes. Es kommt nicht so sehr auf den gemeinsamen Glauben der Erlösung durch Jesus Christus an, als auf Gott und Seinen Willen. Das ist in den Worten der Bibel klar zum Ausdruck gebracht worden : „Ihm ist gegeben alle Gewalt im Himmel und auf Erden“. Diese Idee der Kirche ist aber durch das synkretistische Ideal verdunkelt worden und so steuerte die Entwicklung immer mehr in rein äussere Richtung und machte die Kirche zu einer Organisation, deren Ehrgeiz in der Ausnutzung und Entwicklung der menschlichen Fähigkeit lag. Hierdurch wurden untergeordnete Dinge zum Hauptelement erhoben. An erster Stelle im Christentum stehen aber Gott der Schöpfer und Christus, der Gottes Plan für die Menschheit erfüllt. In einer Welt, in der der Kreuzestod Christi nötig wird, ist der Kernpunkt des Christentums etwas anderes, als eine Gruppe anbetender Einzelmenschen. In einer solchen Welt hat die Zukunft weitere Ausblicke als Ideale wie „allgemeiner Friede auf Erden durch den Völkerbund“ oder „Regelung der Produktion und gerechtere Klassenverteilung“. Die Bibel weist uns auf etwas anderes „ein neuer Himmel und eine neue Erde“, auf eine neue Schöpfung Gottes, wo die menschlichen Möglichkeiten frei werden, die jetzt eingeengt sind, eine Zukunft, die dem schweren Kampf der Menschheit eine andere Bedeutung und Erfüllung gibt. Die Hauptgedanken des Begriffes Kirche sind : „Die Kirche ist der „Körper“ Christi, den Gott zur Vollendung Seines Planes benutzt.“ Aus den Wirkungen des Synkretismus auf das frühe Christentum

sollten wir lernen, wie falsch es ist, wenn wir das Hauptelement im Christentum in der persönlichen Erlösung suchen.

III.

Die „Lebensauffassung“ ist das dritte Element, in dem man den Einfluss des Synkretismus des Altertums zurückverfolgen kann. Obgleich die Zeit des Rationalismus sowie ihre Folgeerscheinung im Materialismus in Europa im allgemeinen überwunden sind, so sind doch einzelne Spuren dieser Erscheinungen — bewusst und unbewusst — zurückgeblieben. Die erste Welle des Rationalismus kam sofort nach der Wiederauffindung der Mathematik und der Entdeckung der Astronomie. Sowohl das 17. als auch das 18. Jahrhundert waren durch diese Art wissenschaftlichen Denkens stark beherrscht, wie wir aus der Tatsache sehen, dass die grossen Philosophen jener Zeit, Descartes und Pascal ursprünglich Mathematiker waren. Diese neue Geisteswelt hatte die Phantasie der Menschen jener Zeit vollständig in ihren Bann gezogen und man glaubte, dass der Rationalismus das Rätsel des Universums lösen würde. Alles, was dieser Hoffnung widersprach, wurde mit Gewalt unterdrückt. Die zweite Welle des Rationalismus brach über die Menschheit des 19. Jahrhunderts hinein zu einer Zeit, als man wieder unter zu grossem Selbstvertrauen litt, als man die Chemie entdeckt hatte und die Technik eine so plötzliche Entwicklung nahm. Heute leben wir unter dem Zeichen der Biologie. Spenglers „Untergang des Abendlandes“ ist ein typisches Beispiel der Uebertragung eines biologischen Symbolismus ohne historische Studien. Der grosse Autor kennt keine andere Lösung des grossen Rätsels des Sinnes der Weltgeschichte, als die eben erwähnte. Die grosse Frage, die das Christentum stellt, die Frage der „Lebensanschauung“ bleibt unbeantwortet und, hätte er eine solche gegeben, so wäre sie absolut pessimistisch und verzweifelt ausgefallen. Das Leben der Menschheit ist ohne Sinn für ihn.

Aber eine Frage bleibt für uns offen : „Woher kommt die Ueberzeugung der Menschen, dass das Streben nach „Kultur“ gerechtfertigt ist?“

Das Christentum ist heute noch wie auch schon im Altertum, als der erste Kampf mit dem Synkretismus begann, die grosse progressive Kraft, der Verfechter der einzigen Lebensanschauung nach der das Leben des Menschen menschenwürdig und wirklich wert ist, gelebt zu werden, da es dem Leben einen Sinn und eine Zukunft gibt. Und dies bringt uns zurück auf unsere erste These, dass der Christ weiss, dass er durch einen göttlichen Willen geschaffen ist.

Der Grundgedanke des Christentums ist die historische Offenbarung Gottes. Inmitten dieser rätselhaften Schöpfung hat Gott der Schöpfer Himmels und der Erden einen bestimmten Plan und ein „erwähltes“ Volk, das Ihm als Werkzeug dienen soll. Angesichts dieses Planes und dieses „Volkes“ Gottes sind alle anderen Kräfte machtlos. Synkretismus führt zu Furcht, die ihren Beistand im Aberglauben sucht. Der Christ aber weiss, dass er ein Glied am „Körper,, Christi, Diener im Plan Gottes ist, er braucht nichts zu fürchten, da er weiss, dass eine grössere Weisheit als die seine ihn führt. In Zeiten des Abstieges aber, wie in der der äusseren Verchristlichung der griechisch-römischen Welt, vermischen sich die christliche und die synkretistische Anschauung. Das römische Reich wurde christlich, aber gleichzeitig wird das Christentum eine Staatsreligion, anstatt der Ruhe in Christo bricht sich ein feiger Individualismus Bahn und durch die Priester wird eine Religion der Furcht gepredigt. Dadurch ändert sich die ganze Lebenseinstellung. Gott und die feste Ueberzeugung Seines Sieges sind nicht mehr das führende Element. Der neue Himmel und die neue Erde sind nicht mehr das Ideal, nach dem man strebt, sondern der Tag des jüngsten Gerichtes ist das Hauptthema, das sich in dieser Religion der Furcht formuliert. Der Mensch sucht seine Zuflucht bei den „Heiligen,,, bei „der Himmelskönigin“, er versucht sich persönliche Verdienste zu erwerben und das „Werk Christi“ wird zum Mittelpunkt des theologischen Denkens. Ja, der Mensch fürchtet sich vor Gott und verschanzte sich hinter dem „Ruhm der Kirche“. Alles dies sind Spuren des frühen Synkretismus, als dieser zuerst eine Vermischung mit dem Christentum einging.

Wir aber müssen daran festhalten, dass unsere christliche Botschaft niemals die der Furcht sein darf. Auch jetzt droht die Gefahr, dass der Synkretismus sich von neuem ins Christentum einschleicht, wenn wir nämlich den Gedanken der Schöpfung in den Hintergrund schieben oder das Christentum als Religion des Einzelmenschen predigen, in der die persönliche Erlösung die Hauptrolle spielt. Aber das Christentum und der Gedanke der Kirche sind für Christus ein und dasselbe. Es bedeutet, dass Christus mitarbeitet am Plan Gottes des Schöpfers, und wir Ihm dabei helfen sollen. Nur so kann die christliche Lebensanschauung der Menschheit wirklich dienen. Und unser Leben hat nur dann einen Sinn, wenn wir vereint mit Christus, der Seine Aufgabe kennt, versuchen bei dieser zu helfen, allerdings in dem Bewusstsein, dass wir angesichts der Ewigkeit immer nur „unwürdige Diener“ in Seinem Werk bleiben können.

Wherein Lies the Uniqueness of Christ ?

An Indian Christian View

P. CHENCHIAH

It is generally conceded that the ' Message of Christianity ' sent forth from the Jerusalem conference, constitutes the high water mark of its inspiration. Though a remarkable, and to those who worked in the committees almost miraculous, unanimity of opinion was reached after much prayer and meditation, it was clear from the very beginning that there were two schools of thought, at first sight irreconcilably opposed to each other, which required to be transcended in a larger and more comprehensive synthesis. The preliminary studies on non-Christian religions were all based on an attempt to discover by sympathetic critical survey, elements of common universal and permanent value. The recognition of spiritual values in other religions, demands a revaluation of Christian theology and a new alignment of Christian dogma. It imposes on the intellect the supremely difficult task of exhibiting the unique in Christianity against a universal common background of spiritual experience inherited by humanity in and through non-Christian religions. The preliminary investigations embodied in the papers submitted to the Conference did not undertake this task, but merely supplied the data necessary for such a reconstruction and stressed the urgency of the problem. It is natural that this search after universal values in other religions without any indication of the bearing of the inquiry on the message of Christianity should have aroused fears in certain minds that this line of thought might rob Christ of his Uniqueness and Christianity of its distinctiveness. For this vague yet real apprehension, the name ' Syncretism ' was used, which was employed more as a symbol of warning than as a term

with precise and definite meaning. This is much to be regretted in the interests of the clarification of the issues involved.

What is Syncretism ?

What is Syncretism ? That it is a danger which has arisen from the comparative study of religions is hinted, though not expressly avowed. As far as I am aware, three tendencies are discernable among scholars engaged in the comparative study of religions. One is an inclination to strike as it were the lowest common denominator of the great religions of the world and to exhibit the common basis thus reached as an acceptable foundation for a world faith. The social gospel exposition of Christianity is perhaps the most conspicuous result of this tendency. The growing belief that the gospel of doing good is the religion behind religions may also be traced to the same source. The second direction in which the comparative study of religions has influenced general thought is found in the growing recognition among scholars of the affinities in religions in ethical teaching, devotional practice, and theological dogmas. Scientific study of religions has done much to destroy the old belief in the isolated and unrelated uniqueness of Christianity, the Rock on which orthodox theology is built. Much that Christians regarded at one time as peculiar to Christianity has been shown to be the common heritage of all religions. A third result, which does not proceed directly from the scientific study of religions but not infrequently arises indirectly from it, is the growth of eclecticism, i.e. a desire to create a new faith by piecing together distinctive elements from different religions, thus composing a spiritual mosaic. Those who warn us against the dangers of syncretism have all these tendencies in mind. Possibly too, the new theology now obtaining in Germany and gaining strength in other countries which regards Christianity as the gift of God and not as the product of human effort, and the Kingdom of God as a world of God which has no manner of contact or connection with history, has thrown into relief and accentuated these tendencies with a view to pointing out their evil and to opposing

them. As Dr. Otto put it at one of the group meetings at Jerusalem, 'Christ is not the culmination nor Christianity the crown of the religious development. Christianity is a break, a jump not a walk over from religion to religion'. This theology is naturally suspicious of the tendencies of comparative study of religions which relates them as stages in one evolutionary process. If we probe the matter further we shall find that we are here face to face with another manifestation of fundamentalism. Man is not the crown of a process in nature. He is a new creation standing apart and having no relation to the evolution of life before him. This is American fundamentalism. So also, Jesus is not the culmination of mankind nor Christianity a development in the evolution of religion. Christ is not a unique man, nor Christianity a unique religion. They are unique all through and so unrelatable to the human process. This is continental fundamentalism. In the light of this philosophy syncretism is not so much eclecticism as the negation of unique-ism, if we may use such an expression. Whatever tends to relate Christianity to the general religious evolution imperils its integrity and supremacy. Christianity rears its heights like an island in the sea, not like a mountain on the land. The age-long controversies are brought back in a new form. Is Christ the son of God or the son of Man, or the son of God who became the son of Man, or the son of Man who became the son of God, or is he a redeeming God, standing apart from history and humanity, snatching us from this world of perdition into a paradise of safety? How does this problem present itself to the Hindu and the Christian in India? Is Christ connected with the religious experiences of Hinduism? Is He the crown of Hinduism as Dr. Farquhar puts it or is He its negation?

Interrelation of Religions

To us in India the problem of the relation of religions is not an intellectual or philosophical problem as in the West. It is essentially a life problem. Other religions are not so many interrogation marks thrown at us by distant faiths. Non-Hindu religions are the very environment in which

Hinduism had to live, even as non-Christian religions are the spiritual atmosphere in which Christianity has to develop. They press on us on all sides, enter into our mental and moral constitution in the shape of inherited culture. To the Indian Christian, Hinduism is the heredity, the living past, the memory content, the organ of spiritual vision and not merely an outside creed. This has to be understood to realise the tremendous importance and fascination of the problem of interrelation of religions to the Indian Church. It comes to us with an urgency hardly intelligible to Christians in the West who had no past but the Christian. At the very beginning of our national existence the Aryan faith which our ancestors brought with them to the plains of the Punjab had to exist side by side with the Dravidian religion. From that day forward, the challenge of religions, and therewith the enigma of the meaning and mystery of emergence of many religions in the dealings of God with men continued to exercise our deepest concern. The Aryan worship of the elements of nature developed in India alongside a Dravidian worship of a similar type. Both worshipped Indra — one through fire and the other through dance. Then came, with the revolution of the Upanishads, a new religion of the absolute, the one without a second — the Brahman — immanent in the creation, which is merely sanctified. Side by side with this worship of the absolute as immanent in the temporal order was the Advaitic creed of the absolute beyond the creative process which is rejected as Maya or unreal. The revolt against the doctrine of the Absolute One brought in its train two religions, Buddhism and Jainism, which denied the Brahman but emphasised the need of salvation and its attainment through the disciplined ethical life of service. Of theism we had at least five different varieties. Firstly, the theism of Siva and Vishnu, i.e. the worship of a divine person as the overlord of the universe ; secondly, the monotheism of the Gita which advocated the worship of the incarnate God as opposed to the God who incarnates ; thirdly, the monotheism of Islam with its exaltation of the ethical supremacy of God as the ruler ; fourthly, the Buddhistic and Jain theism which placed God at the end and not at the beginning of the

cosmic evolution and lastly, the Christian theism emphasising the multi-personality of God. Every one of these religions had a fully developed philosophy of life, a spiritual discipline and an enriching art. Opposed to each other and often engaged in mortal combats, they evoked each other's admiration. The impartial observer felt that they all, in different ways, served the general purpose of religion — namely of guidance in life, of consolation in affliction and of inspiration in the perpetual endeavour of man to improve his lot. They placed salvation as the main objective of religion and impelled men to seek it. To the philosopher, their affinities were as remarkable as their diversities. Why has God created so many religions? Do they embody the same revelation? Then why their vital differences? Do each of them contain a fraction of God's revelation? Then can any one of them be our only faith? Such are the problems, exasperating to a high degree on account of their difficulty and complexity, yet unavoidable by reason of their importance and urgency, that presented themselves to the Hindu, as new religions came from within and without.

The reaction of Hinduism

The natural reaction of every religion when confronted with another, has been to draw within itself and live a life of self-sufficiency. When religions meet, they see in each other open enemies or powerful rivals. The protective measure, instinctively adopted, is to cut off all intercourse with strange faiths and all interchange of influences by rigid isolation and insulation. In the case of revealed religions a ready made philosophy justifying the attitude of aloofness was always available. Almost all revealed religions, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, developed under certain circumstances a type of fundamentalism similar to the one we are witnessing in America and Germany. Hinduism is Sanatana Dharma — the eternal religion based on the divine revelation to Vedic seers and on social legislation imposed by law givers who are equally inspired with the sages. Such a religion has no need of fellowship from the followers of other faiths; it draws on its own inexhaustible resources. Hinduism is not only self-

sufficient but also beyond the jurisdiction of human reason and judgment. It is not of the world to be governed by its laws. It is not a phase of evolution, a product of history, to suffer the fate of all earthly things. It is incapable of progress, or development, since it is eternal. It is God's gift — not a fruit of human endeavour — God's reply to history. Islam has a similar doctrine with regard to the revelation of the five books of Moses, which being eternal can neither be added to nor subtracted from. All the prophets, Mohammed and Christ included, only expound and establish, never improve, on it. Fundamentalism — as a common philosophy of all revealed religions in particular situations — is not peculiar to Christianity and has appeared over and over again in Hinduism in its struggle with other faiths. Such an attitude conserves faith unquestionably, even if it prevents growth. It wraps up its talents and buries them safely, afraid of risking them in the uncertain commerce of life. "Preserving the faith of our fathers intact" is a sentiment not altogether peculiar to Christianity. Hinduism, Islam, Christianity — all maintain that they are unique, unrelated to the world process and immune to its vicissitudes by very much the same philosophy. Such a philosophy looks at other religions at their best as products of wordly wisdom, and at their worst as products of evil. It has no use for them.

The living and expanding influences of Hindu religion did not emanate from this region of thought and action. The vital energies of Hinduism were implanted not in the centre but in the circumference where it was in constant contact with other religions. The pioneers of development in Hinduism worked with a different faith, had a different vision of life. To them the advent of a great religion into India was a challenge for a new search into the larger dealings of God with man. They were impressed with the broad affinities between religions. Did Islam preach one God ? So did Sri Krishna in the Gita. Did St. John proclaim Christ within you ? So did the seers of the Upanishads, of Brahman within man and nature. Did David pour out his heart to a God who protects, helps and consoles ? So did Tamil saints

in a softer and sometimes more elevated strain. We have no more right to overlook the affinities in religions than to neglect their differences. To see the unity of God's revelation is to see its universality as well. God reveals to all even if He does not reveal once for all. Thus was laid in India by these men of larger vision the foundation for the harmony and fellowship of religions. Religious wars, disputations, quarrels and bigotries are born of short-sightedness. We are all, in different religions, the believers in different ways in the same God, participators in the same revelation. As all rivers flow into the same sea, so all religions lead to the same end. God delivers, in diverse ways, through different prophets, the same truth. This doctrine is ingrained in the liberal Hindu and is held by almost all the leaders of modern India. It makes for peace and fellow-feeling among religions.

Yet there were others who realised that differences in religions are not non-essential variations, safely to be neglected. The divergences are as significant as the affinities. What is most valuable in Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, is not what is common to them all. The common denominator fails to do justice to everyone of them. What then is the significance of these differences? God does not reveal all the necessary truth to a single nation or in a single religion. Each religion contains a fragment, a fragment only of total revelation of God to man. No single historic religion is self-sufficient nor contains the full revelation. We have therefore to recover from each religion the revelation vouchsafed to it, and by piecing them all together, arrive at God's purpose for man. True religion is neither Hinduism nor Islam nor Christianity but a religion constructed out of all of these. The axe was laid at the self-sufficiency of historic religions. Historic religions are there as scaffolding to a larger faith. This philosophy led the thinkers in two directions—one in the direction of eclecticism, such as is found in some aspects of Brahmism, Sikhism and in the attempt of Akbar to create a universal religion, which, like Esperanto, the universal language, was composed of the basic roots of all religions. But curiously enough the area of eclecticism in Hinduism is

extraordinarily limited, when we consider its range, sweep and variety. Far more dynamic is the view that the moral to be drawn from the variety of revelations is that we should break the isolation of religions. Religions should not exist side by side like closed circles. Breaches should be effected in the walls that shut them off, so that there may be free interplay of influences. Thus only can life be broadened. We should not compound a new religion. We must plunge the soul in the broad expanse of life that is at the confluence of religions. Let different revelations flow into each other and man plant his feet where they meet. Each religion has a message to the others. God does not only reveal Himself to races and individuals but *through* races and religions to humanity. We should be neither Hindus nor Moslems nor Christians. We should be all these in a Catholic way. What we need is not an agglutination of religions but an expansion of life. This school has been the aroma of Hinduism. It gave us the new Theism of Nanak and Kabir. According to its teaching no Hindu can reject a new faith if he cares for the integrity of his soul.

The growing experience of Hinduism, reflecting its maturer wisdom, has been against the isolation and self-sufficiency of historic religions. Thus fundamentalism has been weighed and found wanting. It is inadequate to the growing needs of man and unworthy of the high conception of God's dealings with man. Isolation in religion is starvation and extinction. God's revelation can be preserved only by casting it on the waters of life even as God saves by leaving His isolated glory and entering into the very heart of creation in incarnation.

The Indian Christian and non-Christian Faiths

It is hazardous to speak for the Indian Christian. The Christian Church in India mechanically reflects the church abroad with which it is connected. Some in the Church hold that Hinduism is darkness and Christianity light and that there can be no alliance between these opposites. These are Fundamentalist to the core. Others are touched by the higher criticism. They indulge mildly in this new wine of thought and stand for a free enquiry into the Scriptures.

There is yet no constructive effort on the subject, no School or System of which we can speak with authority. There are young men who feel the call of the past, the impulse of the culture that is in their veins, and are endeavouring to find out where Christ stands in the general movement of religion. Most of the Christians of the Church in South India are drawn from Hinduism. Islam is not a determining factor as yet in the situation. Naturally where thought is provoked, the problem presents itself as the revelation of Christianity to Hinduism. Hence we have sketched above the Hindu attempt at solving the question. The convert brings with him the liberal outlook of Hinduism into the Christian Church. It is from the background of Hinduism that he sees and interprets Christ. His Christian experience confirms the verdict of Hinduism on the inter-relation of religions. After an experience of one century of the exclusive type of Christianity, in which Christ is seen without a background or on a Jewish background, there is a natural reaction against the philosophy that isolated Christianity from the religious history of mankind. The Hindu tradition is against the view of religions implied in Fundamentalism. The new Christian experience does not confirm its claims.

A convert at the beginning of his Christian life feels keenly the contrast between Hinduism and Christianity. They are incompatible with each other. But as he grows in life he finds that his new faith connects itself naturally and without difficulty with the heritage of the past. The chasm is bridged over. Hence he has no faith in the necessity of the gulf. It is the psychological experience of conversion, more than any other spiritual experience, that nourishes the belief in the great gulf between the old religion and the new. Conversion is a break with the past, a death that cuts asunder the bonds of old life. But a calmer analysis of the available data shows that here as elsewhere, Christian theology suffers from generalisations from imperfect data. We are apt to believe that there is only one type of experience in conversion, i.e. the experience of the revolutionary change. There is a conversion which is not a 'turn about' but a going forward. Many men and women from Hinduism have found them-

selves in the church of Christ without any experience of a spiritual cataclysm. They have grown into Christ as gently and as imperceptibly as a flower blooms. This experience is quite as valid, as well attested, as the experience of abrupt change. The conversion of the 'once born' makes the view of Christianity as the crown of Hinduism intelligible and acceptable. Added to this there is a strain of fundamental religious experience which survives and is strengthened in the new experience of Christ and which lies behind the Indian Christian's attitude. If there is one particular ingrained distinctive feature in Hinduism it is the belief that God is indwelling in the creation, in nature outside and in the personality of man within. This doctrine persisting through all the changes of Hinduism, was the powerful counter-influence to the doctrine of Maya. For surely the creation permeated by Brahman can never become derelict, utterly sinful, abhorrent to God nor totally devoid of reality. This doctrine of Antaryamin (indwelling) re-inforced by the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is the creative centre of Indian Christianity -- its characteristic dynamic and formative influence in theology. The doctrine of the indwelling of the spirit carries with it to my mind, the natural corollary of continuous gradual unfolding of the religious process -- a view which is opposed to the theory of progress by jumps. Finally the unity of experience in devotional and ethical life between Hinduism and Christianity is too solid and real to countenance any conception of Christianity as an unrelated religious experience. Hindu tradition and tradition of the Christian Church fuse into Christian experience, if not easily, sufficiently effectively in the course of time, to make the conviction of their inherent compatibility abiding. The Sermon on the Mount, perhaps the most characteristic feature of Christ's teaching, does not stand out in the passive ethical atmosphere of the East with such startling contrast as in the West. The ethics of the Mount are not the same as the ethics of Hinduism, but they are more in their natural element in India, where Mahavira taught Ahimsa and Buddha humility, tenderness, and renunciation as virtues to be cultivated, than in Rome where courage, firmness of will, and aggression were

ethical traits in the ideal character. Nor does the personality of Jesus stand out in such violent contrast among the founders of Eastern religions as among the heroes of Western life. Christ would feel, one believes, more at home with Buddha and Ramanuja than with Caesar. Conscious as the Indian Christians are of the unspeakable enrichment of life in Christ, they cannot regard it as a life which has no roots in God's dealing with them in the past. There is nothing in their Christian experience which makes an unrelated Christ more real than the Christ who springs from the very heart of Hinduism.

The Uniqueness of Christ

How then does the Indian Christian conceive the Uniqueness of Christ? Is there a view of the place and function of Christianity which does not require a total jettisoning of all pre-Christian experience as irrelevant and ineffective? Both orthodox Christianity and Hinduism make very little use of the conception of evolution. They deal far too much with eternal verities to utilise the potent conception of change but this conception must play a great part in the elucidation of the Uniqueness of Christ.

All religions and sciences in their ultimate analysis are attempts to deal with creative energy. Hinduism is a passionate adventure to pass beyond the creative energy into the great uncreated. Science is a pilgrimage into the sources of creation. Christianity is the announcement that a new creative energy has entered creation and that it will work itself out in the advent of a new heaven, a new earth, and a new man. Beyond the teaching and life of Christ is the fact of Christ, which is of universal significance because it prophesies and realises a new creative order. Herein lies the gospel of Christianity, its Uniqueness. In man, as in Jesus, a new creative factor has entered creation. Man has been the centre and the creator of a new order by virtue of the new life which is his. So also Christ is the creator of the Kingdom of God which is the new world of the children of God. Christianity is the announcement that Christ is not merely a prophet or a saint, not merely the perfect expression of the

forces of life but really the beginning, the birth and the manifestation of a new creation governed by new laws of life. Buddha, Zarathustra, Mahavira, John the Baptist are the greatest among the woman-born, the ripe fruits of the light and life of the world. But the least in the Kingdom of God is greater than the greatest in the Kingdom of the world. Christ is the new centre of a new creation. Christianity is the conviction that with or in Jesus of Nazareth, Humanity has witnessed the birth of a new man, a new spirit, i.e. that this humble Jew is the fulcrum on which the old world swings into the new. All else in Christianity is secondary and derivative. If this is the Unique in Christ, what is the universal in Christianity ?

Universality of Christ

The American Fundamentalist and his opponent the Champion of Evolution do not differ in their estimate of man. Both agree that in Man we witness a new creation. Of this the history of mankind is too obvious and patent an illustration to admit of doubt or dispute. Man has changed creation beyond recognition and has established a new world with himself as its centre. So also the Indian Christian and his orthodox opponent do not differ in their estimate of Jesus. Both agree that in Him a unique and hitherto unknown factor has entered creation. But where the difference comes in is in the manner and method adopted in the creative process for the introduction of factors which make for development. While one holds that Man and the animal kingdom are two separate creations, proceeding from different directions and obeying different laws though similarities are not wanting, the other maintains that life processes develop from within, gradually unfolding. One thinks in terms of gaps, another in terms of continuity. So also Jesus is unique, not because He descends from heaven and stands aloof from Man and history, stretching forth His helping hand across a yawning gulf, but because He issues forth from the heart of Man, revealing Himself as the inner impulse, the motive of a new creative life. The greatness of Christian incarnation lies in the complete identification of God with Man in Christ. The

universality of Christ consists in His being the renovator of the *whole universe* — of nature and life, of thought and morals from its very centre.

We have already indicated that the continuity theory commends itself both on account of its general accord with the observed facts of spiritual life and the philosophic tendencies deeply bedded in the Indian mind, as well as with the realities of religious experience. St. Paul's conception of Christianity while it stands uncompromisingly for the absoluteness and supremacy of Christ, never detaches Him from the great world-process. Jesus called Himself the Son of Man. Whatever supra-human implications that term may contain it is difficult to dissociate it from the notion of essential continuity with Man. He belongs to the creative process. He is the creator and the creature in one. St. Paul's simile of Christ as the new Adam the head of a new world order emphasises the same view. No conception of salvation based on incarnation can escape from identifying God with the creative process, nor can ever affirm the judgment of total condemnation of creation. The doctrine of utter depravity of man and total unreality of the world stands condemned in the central conception of Christianity that God so loved the world that he became man. The doctrine of the indwelling of the spirit and the incarnation of God are central both to Hinduism and Christianity. Two systems which centralise the same conceptions, can never be regarded as inherently incompatible.

The Indian Church has no fear of syncretism as a possible outcome of intimacy with Islam or Hinduism. That danger was never serious in the past, nor is it likely to be in the future. Orthodox Christianity — Catholic and Protestant — is really more syncretistic than most Christians imagine. The spirit of Rome living in the body of Christianity in Roman Catholicism, or the spirit of political individualism allying itself with the spirit of Christ in Protestantism, has produced a patchwork of incompatibles. If Christianity has survived the syncretism of the Church, it can face the new syncretism without detriment to its spiritual life. The suggestion of possible danger of eclecticism is not enough to make the

Indian Church forego the great gain of alliance with an ancient spiritual tradition, which has been its life and light in the past and which so far has helped the Christian to exalt Christ above all names.

This then is the view of the Indian Christian of the meaning and purpose of non-Christian faiths. To every race is entrusted a law, a life and revelation. In the counsels of God, non-Christian religions are preparatory disciplines for the realisation of God's new purpose for man. The reward for fulfilling the discipline conscientiously is the capacity to understand Christ. All non-Christian religions lead to the central point of all religions which is Christ. One has to stand on the high altitudes of pre-Christian revelation to catch the dawn of the new day. Christ comes from within as from without. We might pass Him by and even reject Him not knowing who it is, but for the light which comes to us through religions of the past. But for the discipline of Judaism, the voice of prophecy, no Jew could have seen in Jesus the Christ. Peter's great confession is the homage of Judaism to Christ. So also, but for the discipline of Hinduism, the Hindu might have passed by Jesus. It is the spiritual heritage of the Hindu that makes any Indian recognise the Redeemer in Jesus. The Indian Church is grateful to Hinduism for leading it to Christ. The Church holds that Christ is the crown and glory of Hinduism because looking through Hinduism it has found Christ standing at the end of its long history, and looking through Christ it finds a vista of life leading from his feet to the very heart of Hinduism. Christ does not beckon the Hindu from afar off but enters into the very heart of Hinduism and emerges as a new power that moulds and shapes from within, changing it from glory to glory, even into His own figure and image. With Christ and the Holy Spirit abiding with her, the Indian Church is prepared to plunge into the very depth of Hinduism and come out, not with a patchwork of beliefs but with an enlarged and renovated Life.

Jesus is a cosmic fact — a crisis in creation. There can be no Christianity without this fundamental experience. But a cosmic fact can reveal its full meaning only in a

cosmic context. This can either happen by men of all religions joining hands in a great spiritual circle and looking at Christ for the new light or by Christ's passing through one race consciousness after another, flashing forth new facets of His life. This has happened in the historic progress of Christianity. To the Jews Jesus was the Messiah ; to the Greeks, the Logos ; to the Romans, a creator of a new world order. If in Rome, the centre of the Western world, Jesus has revealed something of His great glory, may we not hope that in India, the great heart and centre of all religions of the East, a further revelation of His cosmic significance may be vouchsafed ? May not the Indian Church realise Christ as the giver of the new creative energy, the Holy Spirit, the divine architect of the Kingdom of God ?

Résumé

On admet généralement que le « Message du Christianisme » émanant de la Conférence de Jérusalem marque le point culminant de l'esprit qui y régna. L'unanimité obtenue tient du miracle, car deux tendances, au premier abord irréconciliables, se manifestèrent dès le début.

L'étude préliminaire des religions non-chrétiennes avait eu pour objet de découvrir en chacune les éléments de valeur permanente. Ceci suppose une évaluation nouvelle de la théologie chrétienne, imposant à l'intelligence une tâche extrêmement difficile : faire ressortir le caractère unique du Christianisme sur le fond commun des expériences spirituelles faites par l'humanité au sein des religions non-chrétiennes. Il était naturel qu'une certaine crainte se fit jour : allait-on dépouiller le Christ de son caractère unique, le Christianisme de son caractère distinctif ? Le mot syncrétisme fut prononcé, plutôt comme mot d'ordre de vigilance que dans un sens précis.

On insinue que le syncrétisme est l'un des dangers auxquels nous expose l'étude des religions comparées. Ceux qui s'y consacrent me semblent pouvoir être classés en trois groupes. Il y a ceux qui inclinent à chercher le plus grand commun dénominateur des grandes religions et à le présenter comme étant le fondement désirable d'une foi universelle. C'est de là que vient la conviction que l'évangile de la bonté est la religion sur laquelle toutes les autres se fondent. Il y a ensuite ceux qui mettent en lumière les ressemblances éthiques,

rituelles, dogmatiques entre les religions. L'étude scientifique de celles-ci a ébranlé ce roc de l'orthodoxie qu'est la croyance à un Christianisme sans rapports avec le reste du monde. Il y a enfin la tendance à l'éclectisme, le désir de créer une foi nouvelle, une sorte de mosaïque spirituelle faite d'éléments empruntés à diverses religions.

C'est contre tout cela que la nouvelle théologie allemande nous met en garde, en affirmant que le Christianisme est le don de Dieu et non le produit des efforts de l'humanité, une rupture, un saut. Nous nous trouvons de nouveau ici en face d'une manifestation de l'orthodoxie. De même que l'homme n'est pas le couronnement d'un développement dans la nature, Jésus n'est pas, nous dit-on, le point culminant de l'humanité. Pour les tenants de cette philosophie, le syncrétisme est avant tout la négation de l'unicité et tout ce qui relie le Christianisme à l'évolution religieuse générale met sa suprématie en péril. Le Christianisme se dresse comme une île dans l'Océan, non comme une montagne sur le sol.

Les rapports entre religions présentent pour nous aux Indes moins un problème philosophique que pratique ; ce fut le cas pour le développement de l'Hindouisme comme c'est maintenant le cas pour le Christianisme. Pour comprendre l'énorme importance que l'Eglise des Indes attache au problème des rapports entre religions, il faut se rendre compte que, pour l'Hindou chrétien, l'Hindouisme est un héritage de culture, un passé encore vivant, un organe de vision spirituelle, et non pas seulement une foi étrangère. La coexistence, dès les débuts de notre vie nationale, de deux religions sur notre sol a posé le problème de la multiplicité des religions et cette énigme n'a cessé depuis de susciter chez nous les réflexions les plus profondes : Adoration aryenne des éléments de la nature ; religion de l'absolu, avec le Brahma immanent dans la création ainsi sanctifiée ; autre foi en l'absolu au delà de la création, qui est rejetée comme étant irréelle (Maya). Enfin, révolte contre la doctrine de l'absolu, avec le Bhoudisme et le Jaïnisme qui mettent l'accent sur la nécessité du salut et sur la vie morale qui l'assure. Toutes ces religions qui s'opposent et si souvent se combattent remplissent pourtant toutes, pour l'observateur impartial, les fonctions proprement religieuses : direction, consolation, inspiration, faisant du salut l'objet essentiel de la foi. Le philosophe juge leurs ressemblances aussi frappantes que leurs différences et se demande pourquoi Dieu a créé tant de religions.

La tendance naturelle de toute religion en face des autres est de voir en elles des ennemies et de se renfermer en elle-même, justifiant cette attitude par des raisonnements philosophiques et se créant

une orthodoxie semblable à celles dont nous avons parlé plus haut. Pour l'Hindouisme, ce sera l'affirmation d'une révélation divine, faite aux prophètes et aux législateurs, qui le place au delà de toute juridiction de la raison humaine. L'Hindouisme n'est pas de ce monde, c'est un don de Dieu, éternel et parfait. L'Islamisme professe une doctrine analogue quant à la révélation du Pentateuque. L'orthodoxie, philosophie commune à toutes les religions révélées, se retrouve dans l'Hindouisme à chaque étape de sa lutte contre d'autres religions et ne permet de voir en elles que tout au plus des fruits de la sagesse humaine. Mais la vie et le rayonnement de l'Hindouisme eurent d'autres sources. C'est ce que les grandes religions ont de commun qui frappa ses propagateurs. Voir l'unité de la révélation de Dieu, c'est aussi voir son universalité. C'est ainsi que ces hommes aux vastes horizons jetèrent aux Indes les fondements d'une fraternité des religions. Comme toutes les rivières coulent vers une mer unique, toutes les religions conduisent au même but, au Dieu qui dispense, de diverses manières et par l'organe de divers prophètes, la même vérité ; voilà la doctrine de l'Hindou libéral. Pourtant, tout le monde aux Indes n'était pas prêt à considérer les différences entre religions comme des variantes négligeables, reconnaissant au contraire que, ce qu'il y a de plus précieux dans l'Hindouisme, l'Islamisme, le Christianisme, n'est pas ce qui leur est commun. Quelle est dès lors la signification de ces différences ? Si aucune religion historique ne présente la plénitude de la révélation et qu'il faille retrouver en chacune la part de révélation qui lui a été accordée pour comprendre tout le dessein de Dieu à l'égard de l'humanité, ces religions historiques ne représentent que les échafaudages d'une religion plus vaste. Ce raisonnement donna naissance, d'une part, à la tendance éclectique, sorte d'espérance des religions qui n'a d'ailleurs qu'une influence limitée ; d'autre part, au mouvement beaucoup plus dynamique qui pousse les religions à sortir de leur isolement pour entrer en rapports féconds les unes avec les autres. Dieu se révèle non aux races et aux hommes, mais, par les races et les religions, à l'humanité toute entière. Nous ne devons être ni Hindous, ni Mahométans, ni Chrétiens, mais tout cela à la fois. C'est là la fleur même de l'Hindouisme : la révélation de Dieu ne se sauve qu'en se perdant.

Dans le sud de l'Inde, la plupart des Chrétiens viennent de l'Hindouisme, car l'Islam ne joue qu'un faible rôle. Or, la tradition hindoue répugne à l'orthodoxie, qui isole le Christianisme de l'histoire religieuse de l'humanité, et le prosélyte apporte dans l'Eglise chrétienne sa largeur hindoue que l'expérience chrétienne vient confirmer. Si, au début, il sent fortement l'incompatibilité de l'Hindouisme et du Christianisme, l'expérience de la vie l'aidera plus tard à établir

un lien entre son passé et sa foi nouvelle ; c'est, en effet, surtout l'expérience de la conversion qui donne le sentiment d'une rupture. Mais il faudrait se garder de généraliser : beaucoup d'Hindous viennent au Christ aussi progressivement que les fleurs croissent et ce qui rend intelligible la conception du Christianisme couronnement de l'Hindouisme. Le trait fondamental de la religion hindoue c'est la foi que Dieu demeure dans la création, dans la nature et dans l'homme, foi qui s'oppose à l'idée d'une création irrémédiablement pécheresse ou encore dénuée de réalité (cf. Maya). Et c'est ce trait confirmé par la foi au Saint-Esprit qui se retrouve au cœur même du Christianisme indien. Cette doctrine a selon moi, pour inévitable corollaire la notion de l'épanouissement progressif du processus religieux. Ajoutons, pour finir, que l'unité de vie religieuse et morale est trop réelle entre l'Hindouisme et le Christianisme pour admettre que le Christianisme soit un fait religieux sans rapports avec les autres. La personnalité de Jésus forme un contraste moins violent avec les fondateurs des religions orientales qu'avec les héros de l'Occident. Comment le Chrétien indien peut-il donc concevoir le caractère unique du Christ ? Le problème de l'énergie créatrice est, en dernière analyse, celui que toutes les religions et toutes les sciences doivent traiter et l'Hindouisme est un effort passionné pour aller au delà de l'énergie créatrice jusqu'à l'incrée, tandis que le Christianisme est l'annonce qu'une nouvelle énergie créatrice est entrée dans le monde pour faire toutes choses nouvelles. Le fait du Christ réalise un nouvel ordre de création et c'est en cela que réside le caractère unique de l'Evangile chrétien. L'apparition de l'homme sur la terre avait créé un ordre nouveau en vertu de la vie nouvelle qui est en lui. De même, le Christ est le créateur du Royaume de Dieu, qui est un monde nouveau destiné aux enfants de Dieu. Il est le premier né d'une création nouvelle et le plus petit, dans ce Royaume de Dieu, est plus grand que les plus grands, Bouddha ou Jean-Baptiste, dans le royaume de ce monde.

Si c'est là l'unicité du Christ, en quoi réside l'universalité du Christianisme ? L'apparition de l'homme a tout changé sur la terre, tout le monde est d'accord sur ce point ; mais, tandis que les uns considèrent que l'homme et le règne animal représentent deux créations distinctes, les autres affirment que le processus de la vie est continu et se développe par épanouissement graduel. De même, nous croyons que Jésus est unique non comme descendant du ciel, séparé de l'homme et de l'histoire, mais comme se révélant du dedans, sortant pour ainsi dire du cœur de l'homme. En Lui se consomme la complète identification de Dieu et de l'homme, et Son universalité consiste en ceci qu'Il est le rénovateur de *l'univers entier*. Saint Paul,

si intransigeant dans son affirmation de la suprématie du Christ, ne l'isole jamais de l'histoire et Jésus s'appelle lui-même le Fils de l'Homme, marquant ainsi la notion d'une essentielle continuité, comme le fait Saint Paul en Le désignant comme le nouvel Adam. Toute conception du salut fondée sur l'incarnation rend impossible la condamnation irrévocable de la création.

L'église indienne ne redoute pas le syncrétisme qui pourrait résulter d'un contact entre elle et l'Islamisme ou l'Hindouisme. Le Christianisme catholique ou protestant est plus syncrétique que la plupart ne l'imaginent, avec l'esprit romain du catholicisme et l'individualisme politique du protestantisme ; et pourtant l'Eglise y a survécu. La vieille tradition spirituelle de l'Hindouisme a aidé jusqu'ici le Chrétien indien à exalter le nom du Christ au dessus de tout nom. Le Chrétien indien croit donc que, dans la providence de Dieu, les religions non-chrétiennes sont des disciplines préparatoires. C'est des hauteurs de la révélation pré-chrétienne qu'on aperçoit l'aurore du jour nouveau. Sans la discipline du Judaïsme, aucun Juif n'eût reconnu en Jésus le Christ. De même, sans la discipline de l'Hindouisme, l'Hindou aurait pu passer devant Jésus sans voir en Lui le Rédempteur ; c'est pourquoi l'église indienne considère le Christ comme la consommation et le couronnement de l'Hindouisme. Jésus représente un fait cosmique, une crise de la création toute entière, qui ne peut nous révéler sa pleine signification que dans un contexte cosmique. Pour les Juifs, Jésus est le Messie ; pour les Grecs, le Logos ; pour les Romains, le créateur d'un ordre nouveau du monde. Aux Indes, au cœur même de toutes les religions de l'Orient, ne pouvons-nous pas espérer qu'une révélation nouvelle de sa signification cosmique nous sera accordée : celle du Christ, divin architecte du Royaume de Dieu.

The Struggle for a Christian Conception of Life

One of the most encouraging elements in the present situation of the Christian church is certainly that there is a steady increase in the number of groups which are addressing themselves to the task of finding a formulation of the Christian message which will be adequate for the needs of the modern world. Our readers will therefore be interested in the following extracts from documents on this subject which came out of two conferences, the first held at York under the leadership of the Archbishop of York and attended by a group of theologians, and other Christian leaders, many of whom are trusted friends of the Federation ; the second held at Geneva and attended by representatives of five international Christian movements. It will be seen how the thoughts expressed in these lines bear upon the main subject of this issue of the *Student World*.

From the report of the *Conference on the Preparation of the Ministry*, prepared by the Archbishop of York, Mr. W. Paton and Mr. J.M. Oldham :

"The Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council has forcibly brought home what was indeed already familiar to many, namely, that we are confronted with a world situation of which the dominating characteristic is the emergence of a mental attitude which seeks to account for experience and to react to it without any reference to God. This, at Jerusalem, was given the name of "secularism" or "secular civilization". The world in which we find ourselves to-day is to a large extent the creation of modern science. The outlook of men is increasingly influenced by the scientific attitude towards life. Modern education is predominantly scientific. Applied science has brought into existence modern industrial civilization in which men find themselves increasingly under the control of impersonal forces. These con-

ditions are rapidly becoming world-wide. In the East as in the West educated men are looking to science as the means of giving them control over the world and of opening up fresh sources of wealth. Western industrialism is spreading throughout the world. Industrially and financially peoples are becoming dependent on one another. National systems of education are being rapidly developed in Asia and Africa as in the past century they have been developed in Europe and America. Educated men throughout the world are tending towards a common outlook. They are learning to speak a language which is the same as that of educated men in all countries. The problem with which the Church has to deal is increasingly one throughout the world.

Emphasis was laid at the Conference on two tendencies which are in one sense opposed to one another, but which both arise out of the situation which has been described.

On the one hand there is a growing openness of mind among scientific workers. The older dogmatism has disappeared. There is an increasing recognition that the method of science is applicable pre-eminently to those parts of experience which are susceptible of exact measurement or which, in other words, can be reduced to mass and matter. Scientific training does not of itself develop the faculty of estimating "value" or "quality". Along with this there are signs that the secular world is losing much of the earlier confidence in the power of science to solve human problems. It is widely felt that the world has got out of control. So far from having an assurance that we are living in a world in which science is going to redeem us, many people have become convinced that the one certain thing is that it is not. This breakdown of scientific confidence is not, however, opening the way to a conception of God such as is held by traditional Christianity. Men are not turning back from their disillusionment to the Church for a gospel. Nevertheless, the loss of confidence in the capacity of man to redeem himself by his own efforts, and with it the loss of hope, offers an opportunity for the presentation of a gospel which men feel to be real.

On the other hand the loss of confidence is only partial. While there is a recognition that science may have its limits,

the achievements of science are not to be denied. The transformations brought about in human life by physical science are dazzling and impressive. While leading scientists may recognize the limitations of science, the dominant tendency is to say, "At any rate science is all we have got". It is believed by many earnest and noble minds that, if the same intellectual energy which has been devoted to obtaining mastery of nature can be given to the study of man himself and of his social institutions, man will be able increasingly to control his own destiny. In the field to which it is applied the scientific method can be tested by the production of visible and tangible results. The engineer calculates his stresses and puts up his bridge; if he works accurately the result is a permanent addition to the welfare of mankind. He is inclined to ask for the application of similar tests to religious beliefs and practices. The point of view represented by what may be described as scientific humanism is finding expression in an abundance of literature which, judged as a means of influencing the average man, is of very fine quality. There is no output from the Christian side at all comparable in effectiveness to this literature.

This, in brief outline, is the situation which the Church has to-day to meet. It is a situation which in its dominant characteristics and main problems is common to the world as a whole."

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From a document submitted to the Study Conference at Geneva by Dr. H. Kræmer: *Christianity in the world and vis-à-vis the world.*

"We are speaking here of what is universally called the modern world — with an attitude towards and a conception of the problems of life, which although in different points ultimately derived from Christianity, viewed as a whole is anti-Christian in inspiration, outlook and purpose. How has Christianity to stand in this world, so described, and in what way should it enter into *discussion* with the world? Hitherto this has been done by the method of apologetics. We must, however, submit that the apologetical attitude is

essentially wrong, because it starts from the false position that Christianity has to be defended. It is, of course, true that Christianity in its historical and relative expressions is attacked, rightly and wrongly, and in that sense sometimes has to be defended. But Christianity, in the sense of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, the Word Incarnate, and in the sense of the only tenable and satisfying philosophy of life, never can be a matter of defence, but is a matter of proclamation. Apologetics have always led to an adjustment of Christianity to the world, by which it often has been robbed of its essential nature and strength. We have not to make Christianity *acceptable* for the world, but an *inescapable appeal* and *inevitable question* to the world.

We can only approach this situation in the right attitude when we, who confess ourselves to be Christians, are not considering ourselves as standing outside that world. We are belonging to it and have fallen a victim in many respects to its un-Christian or de-Christianized consciousness and thinking. Discussion with the modern world means primarily a searchingly critical discussion with ourselves, with Christianity as it is.

All this means that 1) Christian philosophers and theologians have to think out and formulate the Christian revelation in a more vigorous, more universal, way doing justice to the fullness and genuine character of the Christian revelation. And they have to do that on the background of the modern world. 2) This means also that they must enter into the real life and consciousness of the presuppositions, and of the outlook and ideals of the modern world, and from within must create the insight that this modern world and life conception, if it is systematically thought out, has neither a tenable foundation nor a real meaning and justification. In so Socratically creating a deep sense of unrest Christianity gets the opportunity of a hearing, a hearing dictated by human need and human aspiration. Only in this way can it be shown to the modern world (I mean for instance its rationalism, naturalism, humanism, idealism, etc.) that it is on one hand running in a "cul de sac" and on the other hand unconsciously groping towards Christ."

Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Mott

During his visit to India, Dr. Mott paid an unhurried visit to Mahatma Gandhi. *Young India*, the weekly paper edited by Mr. Gandhi himself, has published a record of the conversation between them. Unhappily the interview as published gives a much fuller account of the remarks of Mr. Gandhi than of those of Dr. Mott. In reading these following extracts it should therefore be remembered that they do not give the full story but rather that side of it which is of greatest interest to the Indian public. What Mr. Gandhi says about conversion is particularly important in the light of the present Indian situation. It is not difficult to read between the lines that Dr. Mott and he differ greatly in their views on this particular point.

"They talked about several things, the general political situation in the country, Dominion Status v. Independence, the Congress, the Hindu Moslem question, and the like. At last the doctor asked Gandhi the question : ' What do you consider to be the most valuable contribution that India can make to the progress of the world ? ' ' Non-violence ', replied Gandhi, ' which the country is exhibiting at the present day on a scale unprecedented in history. But for it there might have been a blaze, for provocation of the gravest kind has not been wanting on the side of the Government. There is no doubt a school in the country that believes in violence, but it is a mere excrescence on the surface, and its ideals are not likely to find a congenial soil in the country '.

"From this they passed on to the distinctive contributions of Hinduism, Islam and Christianity to the up-building of the Indian nation. ' The most distinctive and the largest contribution of Hinduism to India's culture ', said the Mahatma, ' is the doctrine of ahimsa (non-violence). It has given a definite bias to the history of the country for the last three thousand years and over, and it has not ceased to be a living

force in the lives of India's millions even to-day. It is a growing doctrine, its message is still being delivered. Its teaching has so far permeated our people that an armed revolution has almost become an impossibility in India, not because, as some would have it, we as a race are physically weak, for it does not require physical strength so much as a devilish will to press a trigger to shoot a person, but because the tradition of ahimsa has struck deep roots among the people'.

"Referring to Islam, he mentioned as its distinctive contribution to India's national culture, 'its unadulterated belief in the oneness of God and a practical application of the truth of the brotherhood of man for those who are nominally within its fold. I call these two distinctive contributions. For in Hinduism the spirit of brotherhood has become too much philosophised. Similarly, though philosophical Hinduism has no other god but God, it cannot be denied that practical Hinduism is not so emphatically uncompromising as Islam'.

" 'What, then, is the contribution of Christianity to the national life of India? I mean the influence of Christ as apart from Christianity, for, I am afraid, there is a wide gulf separating the two at present', asked the doctor.

" 'Aye, there lies the rub', replied Gandhi. 'It is not possible to consider the teaching of a religious teacher apart from the lives of his followers. Unfortunately, Christianity in India has been inextricably mixed up for the last one hundred and fifty years with the British rule. It appears to us as synonymous with materialistic civilization and imperialistic exploitation by the stronger white races of the weaker races of the world. Its contribution to India has been therefore largely of a negative character. It has done some good in spite of its professors. It has shocked us into setting our own house in order. Christian missionary literature has drawn pointed attention to some of our abuses and set us thinking'.

" 'What has interested me most', Dr. Mott proceeded to say, 'is your work in connection with the removal of untouchability. Will you please tell me what is the most

hopeful sign indicating that this institution is, as you say, on its last legs ? ’

“ ‘ It is ’, replied Gandhi, ‘ the reaction that is taking place in orthodox Hinduism and the swiftness with which it has come about. ‘ I may sum up the outlook by saying that I expect the tide against untouchability to rise still more swiftly in the near future, astonishingly swift as it has already been ’.

“ ‘ Where do you find your friends ? Do you get the backing of the Mussulmans and Christians in this work ? ’, the doctor inquired.

“ ‘ The Mussulmans and Christians ’, replied Gandhi, ‘ can, from the very nature of the case, render little help in this matter. The removal of untouchability is purely a question of the purification of Hinduism. This can only be effected from within ’.

“ ‘ But my impression was that Christians would be a great help to you in this connection. Bishop Whitehead made some striking statements about the effect of Christian mass movements in ameliorating the condition of the untouchables in the Madras Presidency ’, observed Dr. Mott cautiously, feeling that he was treading on rather thin ice.

“ ‘ I distrust mass movements of this nature ’, interposed Gandhi. ‘ They have as their object not the upliftment of the untouchables, but their ultimate conversion. This motive of mass proselytization lurking at the background, in my opinion, vitiates missionary effort. ’

“ ‘ There are conflicting opinions on this point ’, put in Dr. Mott ; ‘ there are some who seriously believe that the untouchables would be better off if they turned Christians from conviction, and that it would transform their lives for the better ’.

“ ‘ I am sorry I have been unable to discover any tangible evidence to confirm this view ’, replied Gandhi. ‘ I was once taken to a Christian village. Instead of meeting among the converts with that frankness which one associates with a spiritual transformation, I found an air of evasiveness about them. They were afraid to talk. This struck me as a change not for the better but for the worse. ’

“ Dr. Mott : ‘ Do you, then, disbelieve in all conversion ? ’

“ Gandhi : ‘ I disbelieve in the conversion of one person by another. My effort should never be to undermine another’s faith but to make him a better follower of his own faith. This implies belief in the truth of all religions and, therefore, respect for them. It again implies true humility, a recognition of the fact that the divine light having been vouchsafed to all religions through an imperfect medium of flesh, they must share in more or less degree the imperfection of the vehicle. ’

“ Dr. Mott : ‘ Is it not our duty to help our fellow beings to the maximum of truth that we may possess, to share with them our deepest spiritual experiences ? ’

“ Gandhi : ‘ I am sorry I must again differ from you, for the simple reason that the deepest spiritual truths are always unutterable. That light to which you refer transcends speech. It can be felt only through the inner experience. And then the highest truth needs no communicating, for it is by its very nature self-propelling. It radiates its influence silently as the rose its fragrance without the intervention of a medium. ’

“ Dr. Mott : ‘ But even God sometimes speaks through His prophets. ’

“ Gandhi : ‘ Yes, but the prophets speak not through the tongue but through their lives. I have, however, known that in this matter I am up against a solid wall of Christian opinion. ’

“ Dr. Mott : ‘ Even among Christians there is a school of thought — and it is growing — which holds that the authoritarian method should not be employed but that each individual should be left to discover the deepest truths of life for himself. The argument advanced is that the process of spiritual discovery is bound to vary in the case of different individuals according to their varying needs and temperaments. In other words, they feel that propaganda in the accepted sense of the term is not the most effective method. ’

“ ‘ I am glad to hear you say this ’, remarked Gandhi. ‘ That is what Hinduism certainly inculcates. ’ ”

The New Aim and Basis of the S. C. M. of Great Britain and Ireland

The *pièce de résistance* of the Officers' Conference at Swanwick in July was the consideration of the proposals of the General Committee of the S. C. M. on the new Aim and Basis. As Mr. Cockin told the conference in his introductory remarks, the need for a new Aim and Basis had been felt for a long period already. The old Aim and Basis as drawn up by the ex-service generation immediately after the war could no longer satisfy the needs of students to-day. It had become evident that this Aim and Basis was used very little and that it did not give to outsiders a sufficiently clear idea as to what the S. C. M. as a whole stood for, or help members as a guide to discussion of the message and task of the movement. Work on the preparation of a new statement was begun in 1926. There were various stages — discussions with students and secretaries, with church leaders of the most varying Christian groups and with local S. C. M. groups.

The new Aim and Basis should be thought of as an affirmation of the faith of the movement as a whole. It is not a condition of membership. Neither is it a final and complete statement. But it expresses the corporate convictions of the S. C. M. as clearly as possible. The two relevant articles of the new Constitution read as follows :

Condition of Membership.

"The Student Christian Movement is a fellowship of students who desire to understand the Christian Faith and to live the Christian Life. This desire is the only condition of membership."

Aim and Basis. (Being an expression of the convictions which guide the thought and life of the S. C. M. as a whole :)

"As a Christian Movement we affirm our faith in God our Father, whose nature is creative love and power.

God is made known to us in Jesus Christ in whom we see the true expression of His being and the true nature of man.

Through His life and triumphant death, and through the living energy of the Spirit, we share in the redeeming love which overcomes evil, and find forgiveness, freedom and eternal life.

Faced with the need and perplexity of the world, we desire to give ourselves to Christ and to follow Him wherever He may call us.

We seek the Kingdom of God, the re-creation of all mankind into one family, without distinction of race or nation, class or capacity.

We desire to enter into that fellowship of worship, thought and service which is the heritage of the Christian Church."

A further article speaks of the affiliation of the movement to the World's Student Christian Federation, the objects of which are incorporated bodily into the constitution.

During the discussions which followed two main issues appeared. There were a few who agreed with the idea of having an Aim and Basis as expressing the faith of the movement, but who were not pleased with its contents. Some of them wanted a more positive message in which reference was made to the Divinity of Christ and the divine inspiration of the Scriptures. Others felt that the present Aim and Basis contained already too much of doctrinal affirmation and preferred the old statement as leaving a larger freedom. None of the amendments along these lines, however, were supported by more than a few delegates.

The second issue attracted more attention and more support. It was the one on the question of having an Aim and Basis at all. Some of the questions asked by the students indicate the nature of the difficulty: "If we affirm these things as a movement, does not that imply that we have to accept all of it personally?" "Is the Aim and Basis our

creed ?” “Is not this statement the expression of the convictions of older people who are much further on than we are ?”

The difficulty was one connected with an individualistic conception of the nature of a Christian movement or community. Especially those who had come from surroundings where adherence to formal doctrine, often imposed rather than personally experienced, had been common, repeated again and again that they could not see their way clear to the acceptance of a common expression of faith.

The large majority of students and secretaries however emphasised strongly that a movement is more than merely the sum total of the convictions of its individual members. It was pointed out that membership depended solely on the desire to understand the Christian Faith and to live the Christian Life, but that just for that reason a fingerpost was needed as to the spiritual direction of the movement as a whole. In the end the Aim and Basis as proposed was adopted with very few votes against.

The discussions were on a high plane of disinterested love for the movement and its service to students. The result is of interest not only to other student Movements but also to the Federation as a whole. For, while we do not feel like changing our basis, we are becoming interested in a courageous attempt to find some expression for the corporate faith of our world movement as a whole. The British Movement has helped us to see that such a task, while difficult and never fully finished, is not altogether impossible.

Illusions and Realities in the Psychology of Russian Emigrant Youth

Students of many nations are deeply interested in the situation of Russian youth, both inside and outside Russia. It is not often that a tip of the veil is lifted and that we get more than a superficial impression of what goes on in their circles. For that reason we are glad to be able to give some extracts of an article of Professor Berdiaeff which has appeared in the Russian magazine : *Poul*. The writer is one of the outstanding spiritual leaders of the Russian Student Christian Movement outside Russia and is well-known for his penetrating analyses of the moving forces of our contemporary thought-life. His article in this issue of the Student World shows where he stands himself.

"Emigrant youth is naturally a part of the civil war and the White Movement. Yet in recent years there have arisen new tendencies in the emigration which are not connected with the original attitudes of the emigration in regard to processes taking place within Russia. They may be characterized as a return to Russian processes inside the present Russia itself. These tendencies, whether purely spiritual, religious or national-political, all seek to base themselves on religious foundations. The purely religious spiritual tendency, found in the Christian Student Movement, separates itself from all politics. Of the spiritual national movement and spiritual political movement there is a whole series such as the Europasians, Mladorossi, the National Bolsheviks, and the National-Maximalists. These are tendencies not connected with the traditions of the White Movement, and not rejecting present internal Russian processes. These tendencies do not want to be Restorationist or Counter-Revolutionary but consider themselves fundamentally post-Revolutionary Movements.

Youth is beginning to note that no matter how terrible

the Revolution may have been, its consequences cannot be only negative, there must be positive elements in it as well. Youth is beginning to realize that the Revolution is leading to positive results for the Orthodox Church in Russia, to a religious rebirth and rejuvenation. On the other hand, youth begins to realize also that the Revolution has even positive social consequences, related to the historical development of the Russian people.

After the catastrophe through which Russian youth has lived, true reality is opening itself up to it — religious and national realities. For a hundred years the Russian intelligentsia lived in the dream of Revolution. Then came the Revolution, and this dream no longer governs the soul of Russian youth. Yet in its place there are new illusions mixed with realities. If the illusion of Revolution has been exploded, in its place there has arisen the illusion of restoration. The psychology of emigrant youth is fundamentally Restorationist. I am not using this term in a political sense, but in the psychological and spiritual sense.

The Russian Intelligentsia of the 19th century felt itself removed from reality and dreamed of the future. Modern youth is no less removed from reality, but it dreams not of the future, but of the past. The past frequently seems to emigrant youth to have been the Golden Age. But it is just as false to idealize the past as the future. For the Kingdom of God, the Religion of Truth, the whole life cannot be found either in the past or in the future, nor in the present, but only in the eternal, and only by turning to the eternal and directing the will to the realization of eternal truths in each moment of life can we release mankind from illusions and make people truly realists. In the past there has been a great deal of the eternal, of the beautiful and the good, and there is nothing more ungrateful than the revolutionary rejection of everything of the past. Yet modern youth, is, for instance, greatly attracted to the illusion of theocracy, which in itself never was a reality at any time in history. There has been absolutism but not theocracy.

I fear something like this may take place. For a hundred years in a monarchical régime we dreamed of socialism, now

for a hundred years in the socialist *régime* we will dream of monarchy. But if a person wants to love only monarchical Russia that means that his love for Russia and the Russian people is not his principal affection, and he is moved by the love of a form of government, not by his love for this land and people.

Another illusion has been born — the illusion of a static, finally revealed and completely constructed Orthodoxy ; but this attitude, while it is very strong among youth, is based on ignorance of the history of the Church and of Christianity. This illusion leads to the rejection of the possibility of a creative process of development within the Church, within Orthodoxy. Its view is that there can be movement toward the Church, but not movement within the church. This is, in effect, the rejection of the divine-human character of the Church. Modern youth is frightened by any creative religious movement within the Church and Orthodoxy, feeling it would be destruction of tradition, destruction of the eternal order and system as a sort of heresy. Yet it is not man that demands freedom from God, but God who demands freedom in man and will accept him only as a free being.

Emigrant youth has a tendency to turn the relative into the absolute. They give absolute significance to even relative and temporary elements in the forms of the Orthodox Church. Only ignorance of history can lead to the illusion that Orthodoxy has always had only one style, only one form. Orthodoxy in its historical development has had several forms, and may have many more. The form of Orthodoxy in the epoch of Constantine differed greatly from the forms of the Church at the time of the Church councils and the great teachers of the Church ; and those who believe that the form of Orthodoxy is eternal, turn the habitual into an absolute form. But the life of the Church is a divine-human process and the human side of the Church is changing, is subject to a process of development ; there must be eternal creativeness in it. This dynamic view of Christianity is the only correct understanding of the spiritual life and the only true attitude toward the problems of life.

Emigrant youth sooner or later will need to face up to the post-revolutionary Russia. It will not be easy for youth to defend its faith. There are new problems facing the Orthodox Church in Russia. There has been a radical change in the relationships between the Church and State, and the Church must act in a new social structure and have a new social basis. Emigrant youth does not always understand this change in the position of the Church, and is inclined to bind the Church with their new illusions, sincerely believing that in this way they are remaining true to the Church traditions. The horror which emigrant youth feels towards the Revolution will make it more difficult for them to find a common ground in meeting with youth born in Russia after the Revolution. And this may be very tragic. Perhaps what is most needed is that youth should free itself from the psychological fear which shows itself at every appearance of something new."

Trends in the French Student Movement

In his yearly report Mr. Charles Westphal, General Secretary of the French Student Christian Movement, describes a development in the French Movement which is equally characteristic of a good many other movements to-day. He says:

"The moral problem, so eagerly studied in the last few years, is tending to take a second place, except in one or two circles, and it is primarily the *religious problem* that is occupying the minds of students. What is the 'Christian conception of life'? What is the value of religious experience? By what authority do we believe? What attitudes are possible when we confront life? What can the great Christians teach us, from St. Augustine to St. Thomas, from Calvin to Pascal, from Riviere to the Catholic novelists of to-day? These are the questions that are being asked, and they witness to such a profound need for positive and decisive certainties, that certain students are even demanding that we give up the too often profitless study-circle discussions, and devote ourselves to organising courses in dogmatics. Pierre Maury saw this need four years ago. It has only grown since then. Doubtless it is a part of the vogue for neo-Thomism whose influence is felt among us. Doubtless we must guard against a certain snobbery playing a part in this taste for dogmatics. Doubtless, finally, and this is more serious still, we must watch lest this thirst for authoritative doctrine should be the sign of spiritual indolence and cowardice. But how comprehensible, how legitimate is this thirst, after the ravages left in certain minds by the hasty conclusions of science, drunk with its own progress; after the destruction wrought by the vainglorious affirmations of a rationalism which extinguished in so many souls all sense of the supernatural! The reaction may go too far, but it was necessary. On the other hand, how right those students are, who, before submitting to a moral law, or engaging in social activity, look first for a religious revelation. They wish to draw from the source itself, and is not this always the really essential step?"

Book Reviews

SOME ASPECTS OF THE INDIAN SITUATION, by *Margaret Read and F.A. Cockin*. Publishers: *Student Christian Movement of Great Britain and Ireland*, 32, Russell Square, London, W. C. 1. Price 6d. net.

This series of seven Outline Studies will serve to guide discussion groups to realize some of the most central problems which India of to day presents; and to provide useful material for intelligent understanding and useful exchange of ideas.

The writers, both of whom have had first-hand experience of India, begin with two Introductory Studies on "The British Responsibility for India," and "The Indian Attitude". In the former they illustrate "the sublime ignorance of Indian affairs" which is all too common in Britain — even in Parliament — and indicate the main points regarding the present system of Government in India which need to be clearly grasped. The chapter on the "Indian Attitude", while tracing with insight the factors which have changed the Indian attitude to British rule, hardly seems to indicate clearly enough the revolutionary nature of the change which has taken place, or the universality of the background of mistrust which now lies behind every phase of life in India.

Three studies deal with "Outstanding Issues — Political, Economic, and Social", while the two closing ones are entitled "Education", and "the Contribution of Christianity". Of the Education, they pertinently ask "whether the root cause of failure" (and they justify by statistics the application of the term 'failure' to the Government system of Education in India) "has been the, not deliberately, but actually 'materialistic' character of too much of our education. A system which, of set purpose, pays little or no attention to the cultural and spiritual background of those for whom it is intended is hardly likely to develop citizenship".

Of Christianity in India, they maintain that in spite of its 'profound influence' on the life of India, "yet... these services, great as they are, have been marred by one fundamental failure"; and this failure consists primarily in the "psychology of superiority" on the part of the ruling race, from which "not even missionary bodies have succeeded in keeping themselves free".

We commend these Outlines cordially for the use of study circles in Europe and other lands outside India. Perhaps most Indian readers may feel that the 'detachment' is here and there a little tinged by the British outlook, and has hardly entered fully into the deeper emotions that lie at the root of Indian Nationalism; yet they will all recognize, we think, a genuine note of friendship for India, and a sincere desire to be fair in interpreting the present Indian situation, in its manifold complexity and perplexity.

E. C. D.

THE SECRET OF THE AFRICAN, *by Edwin W. Smith*. Publishers: *Student Christian Movement of Great Britain and Ireland*, 32, Russell Square, London, W. C. 1, pp. 142. Price 3/6d.

The writer of this review has seldom had greater pleasure than in reading the works of the above-named author; a particular case in point was his biography of Aggrey the great African. Here once more he is writing of Africa, and of the deepest that there is in Africa — her religion and her soul. Mr. Smith approaches this subject with that attitude that one could wish to make one's own in any similar study. This work is the outcome of a series of lectures given to Church Missionary Society audiences.

The author starts from the idea that "behind the African's creeds and practices there lies an experience — an immediate awareness of something other than themselves... that behind that awareness there is a feeling of the uncanny, a thrill of awe, a sense of inferiority and dependence." From thence he illustrates what he calls the "dynamic force" proceeding from "magic", a term giving a false impression of that se n

of spirit which is the Negroes' religion, and which profoundly penetrates not only the soul of the African himself, but all his social organization. Three chapters are given up entirely to the conception of the Negro (and especially of the Negro of certain Southern and Western tribes), of that "Something" or "Somebody" which is beyond himself.

We recommend to the notice of missionaries, and future missionaries, his manner of going straight to the facts themselves, and then of interpreting them. It is a method which should be pursued further in the elucidation of that mystery which is the African's conception of God — a mystery that still exists in spite of the really valuable work done by Mr. Smith. He has cast much new light on strange and unexplored corners of the African soul, and for this alone he deserves our warm gratitude.

A. S.

DEUX TYPES D'ATTITUDE RELIGIEUSE : IMMANENCE ET TRANSCENDANCE, *by Jean Piaget and Jean de la Harpe. Editions de l'Association Chrétienne d'Etudiants de Suisse Romande. Imprimerie la Concorde, Lausanne. pp. 82. Price 1.80 s. frs. Pour les Etudiants 5 % réduction.*

Cette brochure de 82 pages livre à la méditation des chercheurs sérieux deux très solides exposés présentés à la 31^{me} conférence d'étudiants des universités romandes à la Sarraz, en mars 1928. Les fortes impressions produites sur ceux qui les ont entendus persistent et le débat ouvert par MM. Piaget et de la Harpe a déjà eu plusieurs rebondissements et ne sera pas clôt de sitôt. Ces deux vigoureuses personnalités intellectuelles ont dit et motivé leur conviction. « Je crois, dit M. Piaget, que le Dieu transcendant, substance spirituelle, créateur du monde, source du miracle (et j'entends par miracle l'intervention directe soit sur l'esprit des hommes, soit sur les êtres physiques) n'est qu'un symbole dû à l'imagination mythologique et enfantine, et sans aucun rapport avec le Dieu en esprit et en vérité que postule la conscience. Je crois d'autre part, et cela est plus grave, que la morale théologique, morale du péché et de l'expiation, est un produit

de la contrainte sociale et éducative, produit solidaire, par conséquent, d'une certaine organisation politique et ne pouvant lui survivre dans la conscience morale. » (P. 27-28.)

M. Piaget, jeune maître dont les travaux sur la psychologie de l'enfance font autorité, est amené à cette profession de foi — dont il serait injuste de ne retenir que l'aspect négatif — par ses réflexions sur les récents résultats de la psychologie et de la sociologie religieuses et plus encore par l'idéalisme métaphysique inspiré de M. Brunschwig, qui lui paraît être la seule véritable explication de l'univers digne d'un savant. On sent également, très forte chez lui, une sympathie pour la morale sans obligation ni sanction, sur laquelle il s'explique moins. M. de la Harpe soutient, à quelques nuances près, les mêmes thèses, en s'appuyant de façon plus générale, sur les exigences de la pensée scientifique et en insistant avec un accent de ferveur qui émeut, sur le gain de spiritualité que procurent la renonciation à la poursuite d'une idole qui aurait son siège hors de nous, et l'assurance du caractère exclusivement intérieur, absolument intime de Dieu.

M. Piaget et de la Harpe donnent des réponses très pertinentes à ceux qui, sans les avoir bien entendues, seraient pressés de leur objecter qu'ils vont nous ramener au culte du moi : tout au contraire ils prétendent nous soumettre à un Dieu qui est à la fois Raison et Amour. Plusieurs de ceux qui liront ces pages n'en ressentiront pas moins un ébranlement. Oter à la religion de Jésus-Christ le caractère de la transcendance n'est pas une pure et simple réforme des modes de penser ; c'est une révolution aux conséquences morales incalculables et avant de franchir un pareil pas, on aimerait être sûr de ne pas être la victime de sciences imparfaites et de vues métaphysiques, impressionnantes sans doute par l'interprétation qu'elles donnent de l'évolution des sciences, mais destinées, comme toutes celles qui les ont précédées, à subir des corrections. Pour notre part, nous nous rangeons complètement à l'avis de ce grand penseur de Suisse romande qu'est M. Arnold Reymond, qui, dans un récent numéro des *Cahiers Protestants* (avril-mai 1929), déclare « qu'immanence et transcendance, loin de s'opposer,

s'appellent mutuellement ». Le débat reprendra avec plus d'ampleur et atteindra un public philosophique élargi lorsque M. Miéville, un autre philosophe lausannois, aura édité sa thèse sur les exigences du rationalisme critique ; elle est une remarquable mise au point de l'idéalisme contemporain qui, à part de rares exceptions, traite le problème de Dieu par prétérition ; le manque de sève religieuse conduit à de vraies lacunes philosophiques... Il serait triste que la religion vint à subir le contre-coup de ces lacunes.

Nous faisons les plus expresses réserves sur les thèses de MM. Piaget et de la Harpe, mais nous nous inclinons devant le haut et rare exemple qu'ils donnent de jeunes savants pensant leur foi avec toute la vigueur de leur intelligence et avec une probité parfaite.

Abel MIROGLIO.

AGGREY OF AFRICA, by Edwin W. Smith. *Publishers: The Student Christian Movement of Great Britain and Ireland, 32 Russell Square, London, W.C.1. Price: 7/6d. net.*

Some years ago when Alex Fraser was discussing with me the possibility of his going to the Gold Coast Colony for the building up of a great college, he said that much depended on whether he got Aggrey or not. He got him, and the fact that applications for admission to Achimota are being received to-day from far distant parts of Africa, such as Uganda and Tanganyika, is testimony to what Aggrey has helped him to do. Though the institution is still in its infancy, it is something of which thoughtful Africans are justly proud. For it embodies ideas for which African Aggrey's life was a persistent struggle. And it has been popularised by his shrewdness and eloquence.

His life, skilfully written by Mr. Edwin Smith and recently published by the Student Christian Movement, London, was largely given up to education. From the age of 16 to 23 he taught in the schools of the Christian mission in the Gold Coast Colony to which he owed his early education. For the next twenty-two years he studied and taught in the United States. The third stage of his life was devoted to

travel through West, East and South Africa on education commissions, and to lectures and conferences in England and Canada. The fourth and all too short period of his life was given to the College in which he saw the salvation of his native land.

But he was a great educationalist because his horizon was never limited to the walls of school or college. He stood for something which could not be expressed in pedagogic terms, and was never isolated from the larger world of ideas and action. He was a great teacher because of his religious and political interests. In politics and religion he was great because to him they were but the instruments of humanity which was the absorbing passion of his life. As a preacher and platform lecturer he inspired, as a teacher he illuminated, but as man to man he won the confidence and love, on which all success that deserves the name depends.

Even if Aggrey had been nothing more than a great friend and teacher, this record of his intense and many-sided vitality, his practical sympathy born of keen insight, his passion for acquiring and imparting knowledge, his evangelical zeal and keen humour, would have been valuable. It is none the worse for the author's refusal to omit what in more ordinary men would have been rather irritating defects. They make the picture more complete and more human. But Aggrey was not only a great man and teacher. He was also a great African. It was because he was so human that he was able to get inside the white man's heart and mind, and to interpret him to his brother African. As a man he won the confidence and affection of every white man who came to know him well. But it was because he was throughout his life essentially African in temperament and outlook that he was able to interpret Africa to Europe and America. In his own person he showed to African and European alike what Africa could produce. By what he was, even more than by what he did or said, he established that co-operation between white and black which was his constant aim through life. For he gave Africa self-respect and hope, with the desire and ability to show the world what Africa's peculiar contribution to its progress might be. His love for his

country induced him in the final stage of his career to refuse flattering and attractive offers of work in the United States and South Africa in order to help in the building up of Achimota. It survived twenty-two years of work in the United States, where in spite of all that he did for the American-Negro community, he never forgot the separate and distinctive needs and problems of the African. It might have led him to throw in his lot with the most extreme and hot-headed African nationalist, for he felt keenly any wrongs which he saw or thought he saw inflicted on his fellow countrymen. But his religion, his practical shrewdness and his knowledge of human and African nature, pointed out to him a very different path of progress. "Never despair, never hate anyone, keep and make yourself indispensable." Not a bad set of maxims for anyone, but particularly sound for those who still have far uphill to go.

As an educationalist he will be remembered mainly for the work of his last few years at Achimota. What he actually accomplished during his many years of teaching in the United States, and subsequently as a member of the two Phelps Stokes Fund Commissions that investigated educational problems in West and East Africa, cannot for obvious reasons be clearly distinguished in this record. All that can be seen is that in this work, as in the first stage of his life's work as a teacher in a mission school in Cape Coast, he gave ample proof of qualities that all great educationalists must possess. He may have been too discursive, too impulsive, rhetorical, at times perhaps in his display of knowledge a little superficial. Such traits, which might unfit the ordinary man for school work, could not weaken the influence of a man consumed with a desire for knowledge and driven by his love for others to communicate what he knew. He possessed pre-eminently the gift of illustration and parable. His work was always imaginative and creative rather than analytical and critical. The amazing number of subjects that he absorbed throughout his life, for he was a learner up to the very end, might have produced the most deplorable results but for his capacity for prompt application or expression of any skill or knowledge that he gained. One of his

admirers notes that "Greek and Latin coloured his whole mode of thought" ; it is certain that he could when necessary use to advantage a classical quotation or cite by way of illustration the structure of a Latin sentence. And the same may perhaps be said of many of his accomplishments, from osteopathy to poultry farming. His learning may have been wide rather than deep, but he was always able to turn it to account. He made others realise that knowledge is power. Though his income was never large, he spent on his library a sum that many scholars with larger means in Europe would envy.

Nor did he stop here. Education for him meant the training of character by action. Happiness meant activity, of hand and eye as well as of mind and soul. Africa, he said, needed three things, Christianity, education, and agriculture. Questions of land tenure always interested him profoundly ; but though he sturdily upheld what he believed to be the legal claims of Africans, he realised that their strongest claims as land-holders must always be their ability to make the most of their land. It is greatly to his credit that, though his early upbringing was entirely on literary and anglicised lines, he never despised or resented manual work. Characteristically he insisted on polishing the shoes of a former master who was in later life his guest. By practice and precept he sought constantly to dispel the illusion that any work of love or utility, however menial, was degrading. Doubtless his study at Hampton and Tuskegee in the United States was largely responsible for this sane and wholesome attitude towards life.

There was much disappointment in South Africa when he was unable to accept the professorship offered him there in 1924. The fruits of his tour visible in the joint councils which united Africans and white men in friendly discussion of racial questions, had encouraged lively hopes. But there can be no doubt as to his wisdom in returning to the land of his birth, the God Coast Colony, to assist in the foundation and early growth of what seems likely in due course to be a real national institution, representative of what is best in African and European culture. There is perhaps in Achimota

to-day nothing that one can point to as essentially the product of Aggrey. But he found in the aims and methods of the Principal and the Governor what was in complete harmony with his own experience and convictions, and it was he who interpreted these aims to his fellowcountrymen. Mr. Fraser may be believed when he says "If Achimota has caught the imagination of West Africans to-day, it is due to Aggrey more than to any other six men." With selfless and unceasing effort he set himself to meet all opposition, to disarm criticism, and to adapt schemes to local susceptibility where such adaptation involved no sacrifice of principle. And when his multifarious labours as interpreter of new ideas, lecturer and teacher, were over, when he had finished interviewing parents and selecting pupils, he still found time for teaching unpaid a night-class of Government clerks who wanted to improve their prospects. How far his unceasing labours and varied activities were responsible for his swift surrender to the disease that smote him, we do not know. All readers alike will sympathise with the colleagues who deplored so premature a death. It would be idle to say that his work was done. In so far as his spirit inspires those who remain, it still goes on. No one certainly can ever despair of Africa or her capacity for fruitful co-operation, while the work and character of this great African are remembered.

Arthur MAYHEW, M.A., I.E.S.

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Dilettantism and Reality

Henry de Montherlant
" Aux Fontaines du Désir "
Grasset - Paris. Price 12 Sw. Frs.

Maurice Magre
" Pourquoi je suis Bouddhiste "
Aux Editions de France
Paris 1928. Price 6 Sw. Frs.

Hamlet at least saw it : To be or not to be, that is the question. Although he did not live up to his conviction, was he right in calling himself a coward ? His sincerity is definite ; for him there is choice, but no compromise. If a cause is entrusted to him, it must become his own in the full sense of the word ; otherwise his will refuses to act. But now his sensitiveness repudiates the cause and so the indispensable unity is frustrated. Therefore Hamlet's inability to commit the act of avenging his father seems due to his very sincerity. As he must do it with his whole being, the queer scruples, the nature of which he does not understand, should be conquered first. And how could he do this better, he thinks, than by musing and musing on the horror of his father's murder, and by turning the details of it over in his mind ? The incident takes on extraordinary dimensions : "The time is out of joint. O cursed spite ! That ever I was born to set it right." His wonder at his incomprehensible inertia lames his will still more, till at last he cannot restrain any longer his accumulated indignation, and has to act as a madman, in order not to betray himself. In the meantime he mistakes other men's resoluteness for more courage or ambition, while in reality they may simply have a more accurate sense of proportion, i.e. know how much indignation to mobilize, to keep their will free for action. Finally his obsession drives him to its goal : he commits the act more like a victim, than a conqueror, and drags other innocent people along with him. He knew that he could not have failed more thoroughly.

Still his was a noble mind. He died like a prince and Captain Fortinbras' words at the end of the last scene, do not occur to anyone as being out of place : "For he was likely, had he been put on, to have proved most royally. "

Hamlet may have doubted his own sincerity, he never doubted that Sincerity is an absolute value, and that there is but one attitude possible in regard to it : to live up to it. That is realism in its pure form.

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We have got our logical, æsthetical and moral conscience. It corresponds to absolute values, which are equally important, for they point to the same Perfect. Compare it to chords of an instrument that we do not see. This instrument would be senseless, if there were not an artist to play it, i.e. a will who animates the chords. Now if you do not want to play flat on your own instrument, you have to tune it by a perfect one. When you sooner or later find out that this is impossible, it is better to recognize this, and to establish the fact again and again, than to lose your auditory acuteness.

Appearances are unmasked as we test them by reality. This is "to be". "Not to be", is to become overwhelmed by circumstances, to lose your hold on reality, and to lose sight of what is absolute and what is relative. If we indulge in it we must take great trouble to justify ourselves by confounding relative and absolute standards. This attempt can be seen everywhere. Indeed, a great topsy-turvy movement seems to go on to day. Relative aims and ambitions are made absolute, while absolute values are dragged down to suit human impotence. And because this whole process has got to be justified, it is wrongly called : Realism. How long will this mystification hold ? Happily there is an urge toward reality in man, that will not be mistaken or stifled. Just look at your own life : if in your direct environment, your social activities, national and international questions, literature, etc., there is no reaching out towards Reality, how hopelessly vulgar and uninteresting it begins to

look. There is real suffering where people are bound by the social duty to be insincere towards themselves. They realise that something is lacking.

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There is nothing therefore astonishing in the fact, that books should appear, like : *Aux Fontaines du Désir*, by Henri DE MONTHERLANT : utterances like his may be expected in a very unreal time. They are indeed an admirable description of a way of living (or not living), that could be defined as : carrying out unreality to its extreme. In the first chapters the author describes the only type of grandeur that he can appreciate : heroism for the sake of self-glorification, as he finds it expressed in the life of Peregrinos, the man who ended his life by a voluntary death on the stake, to prove his utter emancipation and greatness. Was there a greater slave though? This state of mind de Montherlant admires. Put him into Hamlet's place and how would he act ? Or argue ? "Nobody in general and no ghost, even my father's in particular has a right to inflict on me any responsibility. I cannot quite loathe my uncle, for in poisoning my father, he has shown himself to be free from moral shackles. Though I do criticize his act for its senselessness he will not be happy long, for "*tout ce qui est atteint est détruit*". As to myself I am not happy at this court. I'll go South, knowing that I can always come back for this act of revenge, which can serve as a *repoussoir* for the tedious days passed there."

Is this attitude "to be" or "not to be" ? Neither. It is to be *and* not to be at the same time. A floating condition that partakes of life and death. Never commit yourself to anything, for that would mean renunciation, and that is against his confession of faith : Never to deny myself. Always to go to the end of myself.

In the last chapter we see what an irksome job this is ; how many combinations and changes are needed to keep it up. Why should a man who so keenly feels the lack of reality about him, answer to it by still greater futility in his own life ? At any rate he has done a service by publishing homeopathic medicine for our diletantism.

"Do not come here", he says. "if you do not want to fall into this pit of "ennui".

You come across this kind of medicine quite frequently : the literary world must be a well-furnished drug-store !

Here you have one of quite different quality and composition, *Pourquoi je suis Bouddhiste*, by Maurice MAGRE. Listen to this : in his youth the author was systematically impressed by a fanatic priest who began his lesson thus : "I have to talk to you to day about hell and the retribution that awaits him who has a bad first communion". The pupils had the impression that he did not talk to them, but to an imaginary crowd, that had to be terrified with stakes and hell. Now this impression may have become a sort of "fixation" with the author, who can tell ? Anyhow, he did not try in later years to give the thing its right dimensions and certainly did not become "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought". For he boldly identifies the bellowing priest with Christianity ! After this very vulgar thought, M. Magre decides to become a Buddhist ! Authentic Buddhism requires a long and careful training of the will and stupendous discernment ! But the author does not really mean it. It would be best to change the title first, so that it may apply somehow to the contents. *Pourquoi peut-être un jour, je deviendrai Bouddhiste*. He is simply attracted by tales about Buddhism. Now you can very well imagine a person, who has read the book and thinks it charming : ("so sensitive and poetical !") saying to you : "But why take him so seriously, he doesn't himself. Isn't he a poet and author, who may take his inspiration wherever he likes ?" A poet sees reality at a deeper level than we do, his perception is purer than ours. Things that are to us quite commonplace, because the routine of looking or thinking of them has spoilt their uniqueness, the poet reveals in their true light and we recognize them, if we have such good luck. Does he need fairyland to discover "le merveilleux" ? Or occultism which is fairyland to grownups ?

As to the second question, can a poet take his inspiration wherever he likes ? Suppose a general theoretical agreement that all musical compositions could be danced, and

that you go one night to see a famous dancer. On the programme is announced : The Ninth Symphony of Beethoven danced by Mr. Igo Radecksky : What you hear and see is a curious distortion of it : some parts omitted, others queerly lengthened, measures syncopated, etc. Still it is announced as the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven.

What happens to Mr. Igo Radecksky ? He is hissed that evening — and his career as a dancer is gone : because he has shown himself to be an artist without originality and without distinction. First a symphony like that is not meant to be danced, and secondly it was not even taken seriously by the dancer. Like a symphony, a religion is a living organism ; because it is in contact with the Absolute it is living, and it is ridiculous to distort it at your pleasure. The best interpreter will always be the man who has got the deepest insight into its creator's meaning.

If there is an evolution of mankind, it can only mean an ever purer discernment of what is relative and what is absolute. If we fail to live up to our understanding of the last, we are not yet justified in dragging it down. It is stupid to do so for it shuts out Life.

Why instead of more or less subtly making an art out of our dilettantism, should we not listen to the Artist, who longs to inspire us, and even once condescended to express his deep concern about this ?

H. B.

Notes on Contributors

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